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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

MAN THE MAKER OF HIS DESTINY

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

There was a very powerful dynasty in Southern India. They made it a rule to take the horoscope of all the prominent men living from time to time, calculated from the time of their birth. In this way they got a record of leading facts predicted, and compared them afterwards with events as they happened. This was done for a thousand years until they found certain agreements; these were generalized and recorded and made into a huge book. The dynasty died out, but the family of astrologers lived and had the book in their possession. It seems possible that this is how astrology came into existence. Excessive attention to the minutiae of astrology is one of the superstitions which has hurt the Hindus very much.

I think the Greeks first took Astrology to India and took from the Hindus the science of Astronomy and carried it

back with them to Europe. Because in India you will find old altars made according to a certain geometrical plan, and certain things had to be done when the stars were in certain positions. Therefore I think the Greeks gave the Hindus Astrology, and the Hindus gave them Astronomy.

I have seen some astrologers who predicted wonderful things, but I have no reason to believe they predicted them only from the stars, or anything of the sort. In many cases it is simply mind-reading. Sometimes wonderful predictions are made, but in many cases it is arrant trash.

In London, a young man used to come to me and ask me : “What will become of me next year?” I asked him why he asked me so. “I have lost all my money and have become very, very poor.” Money is the only God

of many beings. Weak men, when they lose everything and feel themselves weak, try all sorts of uncanny methods of making money, and come to astrology and all these things. "It is the coward and the fool who says, 'This is fate'"—so says the Sanskrit proverb. But it is the strong man who stands up and says, "I will make my fate." It is people who are getting old who talk of fate. Young men generally do not come to astrology. We *may* be under planetary influence, but it should not matter much to us. Buddha says, "Those that get a living by calculation of the stars, by such art and other lying tricks, are to be avoided"; and he ought to know, because he was the greatest Hindu ever born. Let stars come, what harm is there? If a star disturbs my life, it would not be worth a cent. You will find that astrology and all these mystical things are generally signs of a weak mind; therefore as soon as they are becoming prominent in our minds we should see a physician, take good food, and rest.

If you can get an explanation of a phenomenon from within its nature, it is nonsense to look for an explanation from outside. If the world explains itself, it is nonsense to go outside for an explanation. Have you found any phenomena in the life of a man that you have ever seen which cannot be explained by the power of the man himself? So what is the use of going to the stars, or anything else in the world? My own Karma is sufficient explanation of my present state. So in the case of Jesus himself. We know that his father was only a carpenter. We need not go to anybody else to find an explanation of his power. He was the outcome of his own past, all of which was a preparation for that Jesus. Buddha goes back and back to animal bodies, and tells how he ulti-

mately became Buddha. So what is the use of going to stars for explanation? They may have a little influence, but it is our duty to ignore them rather than hearken to them and make ourselves nervous. This I lay down as the first essential in all I teach: anything that brings spiritual, mental or physical weakness, touch it not with the toes of your feet. Religion is the manifestation of the natural strength that is in man. A spring of infinite power is coiled up and is inside this little body, and that spring is spreading itself. And as it goes on spreading, body after body is found insufficient; it throws them off and takes higher bodies. This is the history of man, of religion, civilization, or progress. That giant Prometheus which is bound, is getting himself unbound. It is always a manifestation of strength, and all these ideas such as astrology, although there may be a grain of truth in them, should be avoided.

There is an old story of an astrologer who came to a king and said, "You are going to die in six months." The king was frightened out of his wits, and was almost about to die then and there from fear. But his minister was a clever man, and this man told the king that these astrologers were fools. The king would not believe him. So the minister saw no other way to make the king see that they were fools but to invite the astrologer to the palace again. There he asked him if his calculations were correct. The astrologer said that there could not be a mistake, but to satisfy him he went through the whole of the calculations again and then said that they were perfectly correct. The king's face became livid. The minister said to the astrologer, "And when do you think you will die?" "In twelve years," was the reply. The minister quickly drew his sword and separated the astrologer's head from the body and said to

the king, "Do you see this liar? He is dead this moment."

If you want your nation to live, keep away from all these things. The only test of good things is that they make us strong. Good is life, evil is death. These superstitious ideas are springing like mushrooms in your country and women wanting in logical analysis of things are ready to believe them. It is because women are striving for liberation, and women have not yet established themselves intellectually. One gets a few lines of poetry from the top of a novel and says she knows the whole of Browning. Another attends a course of three lectures and then thinks she knows everything in the world. The difficulty is that they are unable to throw off the natural superstition of women. They have a lot of money and some intellectual learning, but when they have passed through this transition stage and get on firm ground, they will be all right. But they are played upon by charlatans. Do not be sorry; I do not mean to hurt anyone, but I have to tell the truth. Don't you see how open you are to these things? Don't you see how sincere these women are, how that divinity latent in all never dies? It is only to know how to appeal to the Divine.

The more I live, the more I become convinced every day that every human being is divine. In no man or woman, however vile, does that divinity die. Only he or she does not know how to reach it, and is waiting for the Truth.

And wicked people are trying to deceive him or her with all sorts of fooleries. If one man cheats another for money, you say he is a fool and a blackguard. How much greater is the iniquity of one who wants to fool others spiritually! This is too bad. It is the one test, that truth must make you strong, and put you above superstition. The duty of the philosopher is to raise you above superstition. Even this world, this body and mind are superstitions; what infinite souls you are! And to be tricked by twinkling stars! It is a shameful condition. You are divinities; the twinkling stars owe their existence to you.

I was once travelling in the Himalayas and the long road stretched before us. We poor monks cannot get any one to carry us, so we had to make all the way on foot. There was an old man with us. The way goes up and down for hundreds of miles, and when that old monk saw what was before him, he said, "Oh, sir, how to cross it; I cannot walk any more; my chest will break." I said to him, "Look down at your feet." He did so, and I said, "The road that is under your feet is the road that you have passed over and is the same road that you see before you; it will soon be under your feet." The highest things are under your feet, because you are Divine Stars; all these things are under your feet. You can swallow the stars by the handful if you want; such is your real nature. Be strong, get beyond all superstitions and be free.

THE EDUCATION OF THE MASSES IN INDIA

BY THE EDITOR

I

Those who really feel for India and think of her problems cannot but be shocked at the appalling illiteracy that prevails among the masses of the

country. According to the last census report, about 23½ million out of nearly 358 million total population of India are literate, and in British India, about 19 million out of 271½ million inhabit-

ants are literate. Out of 170 million women in the country, only over four million may be described as barely literate. It goes to show that just over two per cent of the entire female population of the country is literate. In the current year we can compare notes with the percentages of illiterates in the different countries of the world as given in the table below: Egypt has 85.7; Canada, 5.1; U.S.A., 6.0; Mexico, 64.9; U.S.S.R., 47.7; Belgium, 7.5; Bulgaria, 39.7; Spain, 48.0; Esthonia, 10.9; France, 5.8; Greece, 43.8; Hungary, 18.0; Italy, 26.8; Latvia, 18.8; Lithuania, 32.7; Poland, 32.7; Portugal, 65.2; and India, 90.6. One-third of the world's illiterates are in India. India is the only country in the civilized world where such a lamentable percentage of illiteracy has been possible. The figures noted above are sufficient to prove why mass movements in India have met with failures to the utter disappointment of the nation as a whole. It is a strange irony of fate that the mass education in India is even today a dream to be realized in some remote future by the educators of the country!

The educational policy in India has always been indifferent to the educational needs of the masses of India. It has produced a system of education that has deliberately kept the vital interests of the masses in the background. It has created a wide, artificial gulf of difference between the masses and the classes of India. The classes have always looked down upon the masses with an air of superiority born of English education, the main object of which has up till now been to win lucrative posts and to shine in the learned professions. Dr. P. Guha-Thakurta while writing on mass education observed some time ago in the *Twentieth Century*: "A system of edu-

cation which had, for all practical purposes, ignored the 90 per cent of the country's people who live in rural areas and follow agricultural avocations, was foredoomed. There is perhaps no parallel in the educational history of any country where such a total disregard of the educational interests of the masses has been shown, as in India—with the inevitable result of a gradually widening cleavage between the large masses and an educated minority. This is admitted even by intelligent British observers. The *Glasgow Herald*, in a leading article, a few years ago, referring to India's 'intellectual unemployment' said: 'It should be obvious that in the case of a land like India, where the needs of the village population are paramount, a university system that directs men's minds away from and not towards the service of these needs, cannot be giving India what she most urgently requires'. The bankruptcy of the prevalent educational system in India is thus complete." It would be unfair to lay all the blame at the door of the modern system of education. Before the advent of English education and even after that priest-power, foreign invasions, and various social evils were no less responsible for the degradation of the masses in India. Swami Vivekananda remarked: "Our aristocratic ancestors went on treading the common masses of our country under foot, till they became helpless, till under this torment the poor, poor people nearly forgot that they were human beings. They have been compelled to be merely hewers of wood and drawers of water for centuries, so much so, that they are made to believe that they are born as slaves, born as hewers of wood and drawers of water. With all our boasted education of modern times, if anybody says a kind word for them, I

often find our men shrink at once from the duty of lifting them up, these poor down-trodden people. Not only so, but I also find that all sorts of most demoniacal and brutal arguments, culled from the crude ideas of hereditary transmission, and other such gibberish from the Western world, are brought forward in order to brutalize and tyrannize over the poor, all the more." As a result of their own sins, the classes have been the greater losers and find themselves now in a hopeless predicament. The upper classes must suck their own poison and keep the veins of the national life strong and active. The uneducated majority are waking now from their age-long slumber, and it is the bounden duty of the educated minority to devise plans under the existing conditions for the education and the elevation of the former.

II

All eminent thinkers have pointed out the distinctive merits of the masses of India, which they have inherited from the ancient culture of the land. They are far more cultured, more hospitable, more kindly, and less violent in temperament. So, the education of the Indian masses must be different from that of the Western masses. The question presses for solution whether the Indian masses should develop their individuality along their traditional beliefs and practices, or whether they should eschew the Indian civilization as out of date. It is a knotty problem inasmuch as on it depends the future of the Indian nation. Sir John Woodroffe made a clear analysis of the question in his essay on "The Seed of Race". It is good for us to consider the plausibility of his views in this connection: "I would say that we should look primarily *not to the produced* but to the *producer*,

not to transient forms but to the lasting Racial Spirit moulded through the ages of which spirit they are the embodiment; not to past cultural forms, which may or may not be applicable to present needs, but to the Spirit of the Race which manifested in them. Thus the Indian Spirit may, in the 10th century, have produced new, or maintained inherited forms. True conservatism however is not necessarily bound up with the maintenance in the twentieth century of forms a thousand years old, but with the maintenance in its purity of the Racial Spirit which produced or adopted certain forms in the 10th century; and which will produce, if necessary, other new forms or modification of ancient forms of today. After all it is the general Spirit and Principle which counts. The strictly orthodox may be alarmed at this statement, but they may, in large part (that is as to essentials) rest assured. For if the ancient spirit is conserved, that is, if the Racial Sangskâra is maintained, such modification and even apparent novelty as are produced must be, from the nature of the case, in true relation and conformity with the Sangskâra out of which they have arisen. In other words an Indian soul can never for any length of time wander far from the essentials of its inherited civilization.

But what of the extreme Westernizer in theory and practice? Have we not here a breach with tradition and a new Karma? Will not this Karma generate a new Sangskâra? Certainly there is a breach and a new Karma but that it can generate a Sangskâra which can altogether overpower, in the general body, that accumulated in countless past ages I do not believe to be possible. This assumes of course that the present people continue as an independent racial unity and do not disappear

either through disease, intermingling with other stocks or, according to Hindu ideas, pass away upon the re-birth of Indian Souls in other bodies and of other Souls in Indian bodies. The persistence of racial characteristics and what is described as the 'call of the blood' is observed in even highly unfavourable surroundings. Temporarily, however, the Racial Sangskâra (though not lost) may be submerged. That is what has happened in some cases through Western influences in the India of today."

It is clear from the above considerations that in the work of elevating the masses of India, we need not cut off their age-long cultural moorings, their unschooled ideas of God and metaphysics, their religious rites and ceremonies, and their sound and simple habits. It would be a folly to preach before them materialistic ideas of the West and to inspire them with the ideals of various offshoots of economism and aggressive nationalism. The masses are imbued with the lofty ideas of life from their epic-stories, folk-plays, kirtan, kathakatâ, and similar other sources. So, it would be a difficult task for the so-called educated people to initiate them into a materialistic interpretation of life, nor would it be wise for them to do so even for the material progress of India.

It should be the main business of the national workers to help them in developing their lost individuality. It should be the prime duty of the upper classes to preach to them the gospel of equality and to love and treat them as equals.

III

The necessity of popularizing the principle of free, universal education in the country is strongly felt by all earnest seekers after the welfare of the

Indian masses. There are so many things that stand in the way of realizing the principle to any appreciable degree. Firstly, there are no serious attempts to translate it into action. The village primary schools are handicapped for want of finance and trained teachers. Secondly, there is the abject poverty reigning among the agricultural masses, so much so that education has no charm for them. Thirdly, the primary education that is now prevalent in villages and small towns of India has no attractiveness because of its classroom routine and of its encroachment upon the time and leisure of the farmers' or wage-earners' children. Fourthly, there are very few night schools in villages and small towns that are really useful to the masses. Fifthly, what is most important of all is that primary schools are not organized on the principle of learning things in working hours. Sixthly, the last and not the least of all is that self-sacrificing and trained teachers are very rare among the people who are in the active field of spreading literacy among the masses.

Regarding the rural schools for universal popular education, Dr. P. Guha-Thakurta observes: "There are two distinct types of such schools, the Bombay type and the Punjab type. The range of both the types is, however, very limited; and it is doubtful if there can be any large popular demand for either of them in any comprehensive scheme of rural education on mass lines. Both types aim at imparting some amount of practical training in elementary agriculture, including learning how to handle agricultural machinery and look after cattle and farm. Particularly with the Punjab type of which more than 60 schools are in existence, theoretical instruction in the class room is supported by actual manual work in the rudimentary processes of small-scale

farming. But neither the Bombay nor the Punjab models, self-contained and circumscribed as they both are, can appeal to the large mass of rural population of the country. The Royal Commission on Agriculture found the Bombay type rather costly and more or less 'an artificial addition to the educational system and in no way a natural development of it'. As regards the Punjab type, although it has made some little headway in the province, its ultimate utility is practically negligible. The real need of the children of the cultivating or landholding class in rural areas is not the finding of a slightly better form of career in agriculture than is available at present, but of making a decidedly better living out of agriculture. So, even the elementary experience they may gain in model rural schools or farms is largely wasted on them, and therefore, lost to the Indian countryside as a whole." So, we see that these rural schools are manufacturing a handful of teachers and village accountants. Besides this, the inclusion of elementary agriculture only in the rural schools cannot meet so many other needs of mass education.

In towns and cities, the general masses of people may be a little more intelligent and informed, but the degrading forces in them are too suffocating for them to breathe a moral and religious atmosphere. The poor working in towns and cities have almost been out of touch with the culture of the land, and they are gradually being brutalized by the machine-dominated life and activities. So, unless the sober and educated section of the Indian public take seriously the problem of mass education, there is hardly any hope for them. The days are coming fast, when the public will have to take it for their own interests as the national

problems become more urgent than ever for their immediate solution.

The Government grants on education are too small and they are nothing compared with those in the advanced countries of the world. The public should come forward with sufficient funds to eradicate the evil of mass illiteracy. The finest educational institutions in the U.S.A. and some other prosperous countries of the world have been established on private charity and individual efforts. It is for the Indians to find out means for the spread of literacy in their country, without looking to the State institutions and State help.

IV

The well-being of the educated and upper classes lies in spreading literacy among the common people and in helping them to get their legitimate rights. Swami Vivekananda cried himself hoarse over the raising of the masses of India. He had some constructive and lofty ideas in his programme of mass education in India. He used to ask young and cultured people of India to go to villages with cameras, globes, maps, etc., with a view to giving the illiterate some information about Geography, History, Astronomy, and Indian culture. He advised them to teach the people in their vernaculars, to give them ideas so that they may open their eyes and see what is going on in the world around them. Education must be, according to him, given freely and it should go to their doors through bands of efficient and self-sacrificing preachers and workers. The motto which the great Swami wanted his countrymen to keep before them was, "Elevation of the masses without injuring their religion". He stressed also that the masses should at the same time be instructed in simple

words about the necessities of life and in trade, commerce, and agriculture. These things for the uplift of the masses require genuine sympathy for them and willingness for the real work among

the down-trodden, poor countrymen. Otherwise, no satisfactory results can be attained by drawing up schemes and passing resolutions in open meetings and councils.

HINDUISM AND BUDDHISM*

BY PROF. DR. HELMUTH VON GLASENAPP

The view of the world of Buddhism is a special form of the general Indian view. All the essential points of the latter are to be found in it: viz., the theory of the world law (law of the universe), the periodic creation of the world, its destruction, the ages, evolution of creatures, Karma, and emancipation. Exactly as in orthodox Hinduism the most different theoretical, metaphysical, and ethical teachings are mixed up with one another and are forms of expression of the same truth, suited to the necessities of the different kinds of men. Besides other differences (e.g. theism occurs only as a kind of under-current), the Anatta theory must be specially mentioned as the characteristic difference between Buddhism and Hinduism. The view that the self of a man is not imperishable, that it is destroyed and that a new individual is born under the influence of Karma, who is the heir to the good and bad deeds of the deceased, is found in the holy scriptures of the Brâhmanas (*Brihadâranyaka-Upanishad* 3, 2, 13). It occurs there, however, only as an isolated passage and the orthodox people have later on dropped it; all Brâhmanical systems teach the existence of immortal souls. Buddhism, on the other hand, has always represented, at least in theory, the view that "there is no self" and has made it the main

point of its theory of salvation. Buddhist writers consider their religion as superior to all others since it earnestly tries to train them up to "selflessness" in the highest sense.

These and other differences would not have made Buddhism an independent religion different from Hinduism, for in its astonishing all-comprehensive tolerance, Hinduism would have very well tolerated the existence of a sect with such philosophical views. What brought about the clear separation was something different. In the orthodox Hinduism of former times, with the greatest tolerance of metaphysical views, as could be easily proved, was combined an intolerance with regard to social matters, which increased in course of time.

Hinduism is called "Varnâshrama Dharma", the eternal law about castes and stages of life. Any offence committed against this social organization is an intolerable damage done to the moral structure of the world. The professional protectors of this sanctified institution are, however, the Brâhmanas, who claimed the front rank as compared with other castes, and this claim was very rarely contested. Buddha challenged this claim clearly and distinctly. For, since according to him perfection can be attained only by the moral behaviour of the individual,

* Translated from the original German by Prof. K. Amrita Row, M.A.

by ascetic discipline and by understanding the four sacred truths, which had been revealed to him under the Bodhi tree, the Brâhmanical sacrificial system, which in the opinion of the priest could give only transitory heavenly bliss and not emancipation, appeared to him to be of doubtful value; animal sacrifices were naturally a horror to his compassionate heart. He also challenged the esoteric doctrines of the Brahmins arising out of animal sacrifices as propounded in the appendices to the *Vedas*, in the *Brâhmanas* and *Upanishads*. For, these doctrines as part of the eternal revelation of the *Veda* had to be communicated only to the men of the higher Aryan castes, who were found worthy of it by the Masters. Buddha taught the eternal doctrines, which ought to be available to every one, whose mind and heart were capable of receiving them. He has therefore bitterly criticized the "hawking of the secret doctrine" by the Brahmin priests. He has repeatedly emphasized the point that it is not the fact that a person belongs to a privileged class, but only the spiritual and moral qualities that should entitle a person to progress on the path of emancipation.

Buddha was not the first, nor was he the last amongst the religious teachers of India, who raised a protest against the claims of the Brahmins. It was in his time that the resentment of the nobles of the warrior class was strongest against the pretensions of the priestly class. This is evident not only from the success of the other anti-Brâhmanical movements, such as Jainism, but also from the holy scriptures of the Brahmins themselves; it is related several times in the *Upanishads* how the Kshatriyas defeated and humiliated the Brahmins in the discussions about the nature of the absolute. While, however, the Brahmins succeeded in

accommodating themselves somehow or other to the wishes of the most of the original anti-Brâhmanical movements, Buddhism remained true to its principles and finally met with destruction in Hindustan; when Buddhism declined, it could not resist the rejuvenated Brâhmanism and became extinct in the land of its birth.

The refusal to acknowledge the claim of the Brahmins that they were the sole repositories of the supernatural revelation had far-reaching consequences for Buddhism. For, according as it developed to a world religion from the teachings of a small order of monks, there increased the necessity to offer to its own followers what Brâhmanism gave to its own. There arose a sacred literature, which in the eyes of the devout Buddhists was of no less universal validity than the holy *Vedas*, a phantastic cosmology and mythology which was in no way inferior to that of the Brahmins, and finally a vast system of worship and incantations which could compete with that of the Brahmins in every respect. Indeed, even a regular priesthood had finally developed in later Buddhism. This priesthood, however, differed essentially from that of Hinduism, inasmuch as it was not hereditary, but the priests were supplemented from a number of ordained monks; all the same it exercised no less power in the church and the state. The position of the Lama in Tibet is in no way inferior to that of the Brâhmanas. There is a further similarity to the Brahmin priesthood, since monks are permitted to marry and thus a hereditary priesthood has developed, as for example amongst the Vajrâcâryas of Nepal, the red caps of the Himalayan territory or amongst the descendants of Shinran Shonin as princely abbots of the Japanese Shin Sect. Thus, in some countries the later development of Buddhism

has led to the paradoxical position that an originally anti-clerical religion finally created a priesthood, which like the Brahmins, against whom there was always a campaign, claimed for itself a privileged position in society, since the members of this class have a knowledge of the holy ceremonies, which gives them supernatural powers.

The principles, on which the claims of the Brâhmanical caste are based are of fundamental importance for the attitude of Buddha towards the caste system. The institution of caste, as it obtains even today in Brâhmanism, is to him not an essential and decisive factor within the religio-social organization, but according to him it is an institution of the society, which has nothing to do with the path of salvation preached by him. It lies as it were on a different plane from that of the invisible sphere of his community. The caste is of divine origin, as the famous Purusha Sukta of the *Rig Veda* 10,90 says : The Brâhmanas were born from the mouth, the Kshatriyas from the arms, the Vaishyas from the thighs and the Shudras from the feet of the divine Purusha, the original source of the universe. But, as mentioned in *Digha-nikâya* and as the later dogmatists have explained, it is a human invention, which arose out of the necessities of the times in the third Asankhyeya period of our age, when men had become wicked and had to work to earn their daily bread. From the fact that Buddha does not attribute divine origin to the caste system, many scholars have hastily inferred that Buddha has condemned caste system. Far from it. Never and nowhere did Buddha set himself up as a social reformer. He did not wish to create the caste system as an institution of society, and so proclaimed the equality of all men. What he did, was something quite different; he decided that

differences in caste should not stand in the way of people being admitted into Buddhism as laymen or monks. We thus find in the circle of his first disciples, besides people belonging to the higher strata of society, who seem to have formed the majority of his followers, also people from the lower castes (like Sunita, the Scavenger). That persons of various castes could become followers of a holy person or members of a religious order with equal privileges is not by itself a specifically Buddhist conception. Amongst the different sects of the Hindus of the ancient and modern times similar things are to be found. The main difference lies in another thing; for Brâhmanism, caste-system plays such an important rôle in life that it considers caste distinction does not exist only in the stage of asceticism, which is above all earthly things, and it considers all its followers as belonging to one of the castes recognized by it. Today, no one can become a Hindu on the basis of his religious convictions. Only those who are proved to be members of a recognized caste are Hindus. Brâhmanism does not convert individuals to its faith, but it absorbs an entire caste by establishing the fiction that the caste formerly belonged to it, but this connection was lost in course of time and that it has been re-established by a new consecration. On this basis, Hinduism has converted the semi-wild tribes in Assam to Hinduism. Although the conditions in earlier times might have been somewhat different, when caste-system had not so strongly developed, the fact that wherever Hinduism prevails, caste system exists e.g. in the island of Bali, shows most clearly how the faith in the Hindu gods has been very closely connected at all times with the recognition of social organization.

On the other hand, Buddhism

considers that the only criterion for becoming a Buddhist is to follow Buddha and his teachings. He therefore did not introduce caste system where it did not exist. He has converted persons to his faith, without enquiring to what caste they belonged. This "universalism" which broke through the boundaries of caste system, which were occasionally extended but always respected by the Brâhmanas is the main reason why Buddhism has become a world religion. Brâhmanism was indeed able to establish itself where Indian immigrants settled themselves and impressed their own social system on a foreign people; but it was never able to subjugate the vast region of Central and Eastern Asia, which was only very rarely visited by Indians. Buddhism, on the other hand, found no difficulty in impressing the stamp of its spirit even on people whose views and customs would not tolerate even such a modified form of the Indian caste system.

From what has been said above, it is evident that, with regard to the philosophy of religion Buddhism should be considered as one of the numerous forms of expressions of Indian thought, but that it strongly differs from orthodox Brâhmanism in its social aspect. It may be paradoxically called Hinduism without Brâhmanism, if Hinduism is interpreted as "autochthon-Indian view of life".

Nothing would be able to show more clearly the fact that Buddhism is of the same nature as Brahmanism with regard to the spiritual aspect, than a survey of its history. The three great phases, which it ran through on the Indian soil, are exact parallels of the tendencies which are evident in the development of Brâhmanism.

1. The original community of Buddhists arose at a time when the Vedic

gods and the sacrificial system began to lose their hold on the minds of the Hindus and filled all inquisitive minds with a desire for a new religion. Its nucleus was an order of seekers after emancipation, who gathered round a master, one might say, a school of philosophers like that of Pythagoras. This school attracted to itself a fluctuating circle of laymen, who took an interest in the teachings of Buddha, as "sympathizers" and tried to live to a certain extent in accordance with his precepts. This school of philosophers practised meditation; they tried to act on other strata of society by preaching. The metaphysical system which they promulgated is similar to that of the Hindus at the close of the Vedic period, inasmuch as the doctrines were based mainly on Dharma, Karma, and Nirvâna. Like the other contemporary systems (theology of sacrifices, Sâmkhya and Jainism), it recognized a multitude of transient gods, but not a god governing the universe. The community around Buddha had no real cult like other societies of philosophers. The members of the order did not require any cult, since they, just like the thinkers of the Upanishads, hoped to attain salvation through meditation and not by performance of sacrifices. The laymen who reposed faith in cultic observances had sufficient opportunity to apply to Brâhmanas or other priests as exorcisers of spirits. For, to start with it must be remarked that Buddhism has not and never been a system of faith in the Christian sense of the West; if a person belonged to Buddhism, it did not prevent him from participating in the worship of the Vedic gods or other rites. After the death of Buddha, the Buddhists preserved the memory of their master, who had attained Nirvâna, by collecting his relics and later on, symbols represent-

ing him (such as, wheel of the law), and finally by erecting statues in his memory. Thus as the number of adherents to the faith increased and the order of the 'exalted persons', from a small circle of disciples of philosophical-meditative ascetics became an enormous institution, aided by the state, with its own large buildings, there arose a worship before the images of Buddha, which in its external form had much in common with that of the gods of the Brahmins, but according to the Buddhist priests was something quite different, since it did not serve to the realization of desires either in this world or in the next but served only for remembering the exalted one who had attained Nirvâna and for purification of one's own heart.

This form of Buddhism sketched here, which was called later on "Hinayâna" (small vehicle) is found even today unchanged in its essential characteristics in Ceylon and Indo-China. It reflects to a certain extent even now the austere character of the religion of a monastic order in the Upanishadic times.

2. The sacrificial system without idols of the Vedic Aryans was gradually replaced in the last centuries of our era by a new form of religion, which clearly bears the traits of a strong non-Aryan, Dravidian elements, viz., the Brâhmanism of the classical time, when it was most flourishing with its worship of Siva, Vishnu, and a rich Pantheon of other gods, with its worship of idols and new forms of devotional exercises, with its perfect philosophical systems and its highly developed technique. In Buddhism also the effect of time is quite apparent. New saviours, and new divinities of which old Buddhism knew nothing, began to be worshipped with a complicated ritual which is not unlike the "Pûjâ" of the

Hindus. Deep philosophical speculation created metaphysical systems, the details of which were worked out in accordance with the methods prevalent at that time. However, it is specially noteworthy how the atheistic teachings of the ancient times became more and more theopanthestic and theistic. Buddha himself became a personal-superpersonal God, who in his three aspects as absolute, as a supernatural ruler of heaven and as a historical personage visibly wandering on the earth is like Vishnu in his three forms as the incomprehensible Brahma, as the Lord of Vaikuntha, unaffected by sorrow and as Krishna fighting and suffering in this world. Even the conception, which is so different from the older Buddhism, that man, to whom it is not possible to attain salvation by his own power, can attain it through Bhakti with the help of a merciful God, as in Krishnaism, occurs now in the teaching of Bodhisattva and the gracious Buddha Amitâbha. Just as in the *Bhagavad-Gitâ*, besides the endeavour of the secluded ascetic to attain knowledge by meditation, a new path of salvation is proclaimed, which requires selfless devotion to the well-being of fellow creatures, the ideal of the Buddhists is now to help the process of emancipation of humanity by action. The Buddhism of this new type, richer in mythology, is the "Mahâyâna", the great vehicle, which has extended its triumphal march from the North-Western India across the whole of the "Ganges continent" (Hindustan) and the neighbouring lands in the north (Turkestan, Afghanistan), east (Indo-China) and south (Java) and which still prevails in China, Korea and Japan.

3. About the middle of the first millennium after Christ, religious conceptions, which have been incorporated

in the holy texts, the so-called "Tantras" gained ground in Hindustan. These are very ancient conceptions, which go back to remote antiquity (the excavations of Mohenjo Daro seem to point to the fact that they were known to a large extent about 3000 B.C.) and which were scientifically systematized and embodied into Sanskrit texts and have been plagiarized into Brâhmanical writings. The Tantras contain two things: they teach various rites, mystic actions and incantations by which magical forces can be released or bound in this and the next world (real Tantraism), and then they preach the worship of the female goddesses, the so-called "Saktis" i.e. energies, to whom a ritual which passes over into eroticism is consecrated. These new tendencies are also found in Buddhism. They transform the religion of Gautama into a mystical secret science, which endeavours to bind and unchain the demoniacal forces and often permits a complete surrender to the joys of this world by means of rituals, as strongly contrasted with the overcoming of the sensual propensities through renunciation, taught by Buddha himself. This third Tântic and Sâktaic form of Buddhism is known as "Mantra-yâna" (vehicle of incantations) or "Vajrayâna" (diamond vehicle or vehicle of the thunderbolt). It has found its followers in all fields of Buddhistic mission, no where to such a large extent as in Tibet, Mongolia and in the Himalayan states where it flourishes even today.

The Vajrayâna is the last phase of Buddhism. With it ends its history so full of changes in India. Being almost extinct in the land of its birth towards the end of the first millennium after

Christ, it had nothing more to do with the further development of Indian religion. If it had fallen to its lot to exist still longer in the land in which it had originated, probably under the influence of Islam, religious sects which did not tolerate idol-worship would have arisen in it, just like the sects of Kabirpanthis and the Sikhs in Hinduism and the Sthânakavâsis in Jainism; probably it would have given rise today to reform movements, which like the Brâhma Samâj and the Arya-Samâj would have endeavoured to combine Indian religion with modern Western science. But fate had willed it otherwise, it made Buddhism finally take a separate existence and allowed it to return to its motherland.

Having originally arisen from Brâhmanism, Buddhism existed side by side with it, underwent the same changes as Brâhmanism and finally merged into it, not without leaving clear traces of its former separate existence. Thus, it is like a stream which branched away from another, continued its way for a long time, running always parallel to it, in order finally to be united with it.

Buddhism has been only an episode in India itself, of course an episode of uncommon fruitfulness and far-reaching influence. While it flourished, it was able to create for itself other homes, outside India, its own home, which faithfully preserved the doctrines which had become extinct in the land of the Ganges (Hindustan), doctrines which in spite of all the changes they have undergone have retained even in the foreign lands clearly the essential characteristics, which its history of more than 1000 years in India has imprinted on it.

A LUMINOUS SOUL OF INDIA

BY DR. FREDERICK B. ROBINSON

It is with the humility of very limited knowledge that I join in this fellowship to pay tribute to a luminous soul of India. The living flame of human life, ever constant yet ever changing in its particles, rises and spreads; the sparks fly upward and vanish into eternity. A hundred years ago the glowing Ramakrishna became part of the flame, and fifty years later he was merged into the radiance of unlimited glory.

Different as they are superficially, the saints of all ages and of all climes are fundamentally very much alike. Ramakrishna of Kamarpukur in Bengal, and Francis of Assisi in Umbria are aspects of the same spirit of love and worship—one made manifest in Italy of the thirteenth century and the other in India of the nineteenth. Their earthly surroundings, their language, their range of practical action and their methods of appeal to others differed, but their essential spirits were in the same relationship with God and of the same disposition of kindness toward men. Consecrated beings like these, no matter what their surroundings, wing home to the eternal in the normal out-working of their natures.

We need not here consider the details of the beliefs of these and other saints, nor appraise their systems of theology. All such walk with God and enter into the pleasures and pains, the joys and sorrows of all living creatures.

There is an inner life of the soul and an outer life of action. The first has no limitations save those of its own cumulative making; the second is circumscribed by material surroundings

and the conflicting forces of many personalities. Ramakrishna, clearly lived an inner life so abundant and far reaching, so etherial and serenely abstract that few men, concerned mostly with confusing duties in a narrow world of concrete and petty incidents, can even dimly appreciate its free and spacious calm.

We hear people today taking pride in the fact that they are realists. They shape their conduct according to opportunity and do what is expedient in practical affairs, with little or no control by permanent principles. But are they realists in any true sense? Do they not confuse superficial appearance with that which is indeed real and abiding? Ramakrishna was just the opposite of these. To him realization was a process of discovering his own essential self and of identifying it with the source of all life, thought, and action.

It has been said that the difference between the West and the East is the difference between reason and faith. But that is not true, for there is no reason either in the West or the East that, in its last analysis, does not rest on faith. Ultimate truth is had by faith whether it be found in the basic assumption of the physical sciences, the axioms of mathematics or the awareness of our own existence as sentient creatures. By reason, we simply take the gifts of faith and arrange them in different patterns.

The real difference between the West and the East lies rather in their methods of attaining ultimate truth. The West seeks truth through action and striving; the East seeks it through receptive

passivity. The leaders of the East cultivate the technique of relaxation and meditation, the scientists of the West stress experimentation and a life of strenuous endeavour. But a complete method is the combination of the two.

The advantage of the Eastern method, so marked in Ramakrishna, is that it affords a swifter progress in self-realization and awareness of the unity of the universe. Its disadvantage springs from its neglect of the practical affairs of life and consequent remoteness from the daily tasks and troubles of the great mass of humanity, which needs help that is physical, intellectual, and spiritual.

The Western scientists and men of affairs begin with matters close at hand and try by intellectual effort and physical action to make life on earth safe, comfortable, and enjoyable for all. As the greatest of them make progress in their work, they come face to face with ultimate questions which force them to look within themselves, to be quiet and to meditate. The history of almost every successful scientist and man of action is this: the first stage is one of great confidence in the reality of material things as perceived by the senses; then follows much ingenuity in reasoning from observed facts that leads to principles useful in further researches

and practical technology; finally there is a dawning consciousness that behind all the phenomena of which they have become aware, there is a unifying cosmic power or energy, the nature and ways of which are past finding out by the ordinary methods of objective science. At this point they give heed to the admonition, "Be still, and know that I am God!"

While the danger of the Eastern method is the neglect of the practical needs of humanity, so also the Western method has inherent in it the certainty that so many will become preoccupied with practical affairs that all too few will reach the highest stage of meditation on ultimate truth.

Ramakrishna and the divines of all religions render the great service to mankind of stressing the abiding joy that can be had only from a life in harmony with ultimate truth. This joy is one of immediate experience whether or not it can be fully described to others. Ramakrishna had that experience. His ears were filled with the sweet sounds of Krishna's flute, his nostrils took in the fragrance of celestial flowers, his lips tasted the fruits of paradise, his eyes beheld the light that never was on land, or sea, his being was overwhelmed in bliss by the waves of eternity.

THE RELIGION WE ARE BORN IN

BY PROF. SHEO NARAYANA LAL SHRIVASTAVA, M.A.

I

Deep within the heart of man, there is a "cry" for God, a thirst for the Divine. To attain the Divine is, as all religions proclaim, the highest goal of man. The great mystics, prophets, and teachers all the world over were men

who felt acutely a mighty "pull" towards the Divine and by their intense heart-searchings and rigorous disciplines succeeded in realizing the Most High. Having done that for themselves, they proclaimed to the world the ways by which the Divine is to be attained.

The different religions that we find in the world today are the outcome of such proclamations of mystic seers. The tenets and injunctions of the various organized religions, which have been flourishing since the dawn of human civilization are, rightly speaking, simply the principles which their prophets found by their *personal experiences* to be conducive to their spiritual growth and which helped them eventually to scale the high summits of spirituality. Every great historical religion so called is nothing but a code of principles and injunctions which has the personal sanction of its prophet or prophets. The task of codification was done either by the Prophet himself or by his disciples. The principles of Islam we find codified in the *Koran*, of Christianity¹ in the *Bible*, of Zoroastrianism in the *Zend-Avesta*, and of the various sects of Hinduism in their respective books. It may, however, be added here that there is no *One* book or *One* Prophet in Hinduism to which the entire Hindu nation is bound to owe allegiance. Hinduism comprises within its pale a vast multiplicity of differing creeds and philosophical doctrines which people are left free to choose from. But it would be far from truth to deny that the vast majority of the Hindus also are under the canonical sway of their own chosen sub-creeds. The Vaishnavas, the Sâktas, the Saivas, etc. are under the imposition of their own special canons.

Speaking in general, then, we may say that everywhere what may be called an organized religion, is more or less a *code* of certain principles and injunctions laid down by certain prophets or mystic seers. This, I think, is precisely the reason why an organized

¹ I mean the *original* Christianity, not *modern* Christianity with an added wealth of post-Christ literature.

religion fails to be a really helpful pathway to the Divine. If the goal of religion be the attainment of God, then a *codified religion* defeats its own task. A codified religion, a body of fixed and inflexible canons and injunctions professing to be followed by a vast multitude of persons, presupposes that all its followers are on the same level of moral and intellectual attainment and need precisely the same regulative and guiding principles. This, certainly, is a disputable assumption. There is evidently a remarkable difference in the moral and intellectual attainments of different persons and a no less remarkable divergence in their temperaments and proclivities. The principles therefore, that facilitated in his Godward ascent a particular prophet, with his moral, intellectual, and temperamental endowments, need not be profitable for all and sundry. *Individual endowments* are a relevant consideration in chalking out a line of spiritual approach. It is perfectly valid to hold that in a sense, each man has his *own* religion, his own line of spiritual advance, determined by his own moral and mental endowments and his particular place in the scale of evolution. Each man has his own Swadharma. Religion as an endeavour to approach the Divine is an intimately personal problem for everybody. The steps which any man ought to take for his spiritual advance are to be determined by his own store of endowments—moral, intellectual, temperamental, and as we shall see in the sequel, also environmental. The same abominable sin of crushing the *individuality* which is committed by the organized systems of education in schools and colleges, is also committed by the organized religions in the sphere of spiritual training and development. *It is of the very essence of individuality to take its own line of growth.* Steeped in canonical

quagmire, the individual, far from finding a swift and easy spiritual lift, gropes in clotted darkness. The modern world is in vital need of this profound truth. Pressed down by the mechanism of inherited beliefs, our minds and souls have lost the power of healthy expansion!

So, the individual must be left to follow the light of his own inner soul. Within him is the Light-house which illumines the path of his voyage through the turbulent ocean of life's struggles, mundane as well as spiritual. The great spiritual giants of the world, the mighty seers, were fearless souls who had the boldness to set aside the conventional ways of prevalent religions around them, who had the courage to refuse to walk over the beaten tracks, and who went on undaunted following the *light within* them. "Save thyself by thy own self," says the *Bhagavad-Gitá*. The Lord Buddha laid down the highest law of spiritual ascent in his parting message to his beloved disciple: "Be ye your own light, O Ananda!" This is a commandment of no mean significance for spiritual aspirants. Many a genuine spiritual seeker, I am persuaded to believe, is unprofitably lost in the labyrinthian meshes of conventional ways and inherited methods of organized religions. It is often forgotten that to get into the domains of spirit requires a venture, a plunge, a spirit of innovation and exploration. Religious seeking is not an insipid process of relentless conformity to time-honoured customs, but a wanton flight of the soul alighting on newer and newer domains. The truth-seeking Sannyasin is not merely a wanderer in geographical areas, but an explorer in the vast stretches of the Kingdom of Spirit.

I may here be interrupted with a question: What about the insistence of the Hindu thinkers on the assistance

of a Guru for spiritual advance? Well, the Hindu thinkers do emphasize the indispensability of a Guru in spiritual life, but it is worth while bearing in mind what they mean by a Guru. The Guru or the Guide according to the Hindu teachers is one who is illumined, who understands deeply the meaning of the scriptures, who is above all desire and who is spotlessly pure. The Guru to the Hindus has always signified the spiritually Perfect Man, the Illumined Man, the God-Man. Such a man, by virtue of what he is, is able to see the "individual uniqueness" of spiritual aspirants and suggest to them the right and appropriate methods for their spiritual growth. Having himself made his way to Perfection, he is deemed able to show the path to others. The Guru is the clever pilot who is acquainted with the dangerous rocks and turns in the trackless ocean of spiritual voyage. The Guru, such as he is, will be the last man to crush the individuality of the disciples and thrust them into mechanical moulds where they do not fit in. Such a wonderful Guru, we had in recent times in the person of Sri Ramakrishna who is too well known for his extreme judiciousness in the choice of disciples as well as in prescribing methods to each according to his peculiar make-up. But how rare are such Gurus? Is it not better to be without Gurus, unless we find Gurus of such an exalted calibre? The Guruváda of India was never meant to be a mechanical imposition of external injunctions upon individuals, but to benefit the individual by the advice of an expert to evolve along the line of his own individuality. The crushing of individuality was never the aim. But alas! so has it become now! How many people in India today understand the deeper significance of the insistence on the need of a *Guru* and bear in mind

the high qualifications which the Guru ought to possess? It is a pity to see a vast majority of people, led by the conviction that a Guru is indispensable in religious life, falling a prey to the caprices of ill-qualified Gurus who are agencies, not of spiritual gain, but of spiritual ruin. Against such cheap Guruvâda, we have every right to raise a voice of emphatic protest. Better knock against your own soul's door, than fritter away your energies in search of Gurus! Within, within, is the Guide, seated in the heart of all and driving all to their destined goals. Religion, as an endeavour to apprehend the Divine, calls for a deepening of the soul-sense, a ripening of the intuitional receptivity, the awakening of God-sense, in a word, God-vision. God-vision is the high consummation which the religious endeavour seeks to realize. This is the summit which man tries to ascend through various Sâdhanâs. God-realization is the apex of the religious life. But what is the base to take our start from? To put the question simply: What is the first step in the endeavour to attain God? Where does the religious life *begin*? This is a delicate question which does not receive the attention it deserves. We are all anxious to gain the end, but few of us ponder over the appropriateness of the means we adopt! Not a few there are, who have an abundant fervour for God, but in the very intensity of their fervour, perhaps, they fail to notice the unsoundness of the means they are adopting to attain Him. Quite a large number of persons are deluded into the belief that in order to attain God they must lose all active interest in the so-called secular affairs of life and take to a life of meditation and quietism with a supreme unconcern for everything mundane. I am not here questioning the validity or efficacy of

the path of meditation, but I have always felt that many who take to the quietistic life and the yogic and meditative practices are ill-qualified for them and derive little benefit therefrom. In their anxiety to be religious, they console their hearts by doing some Prânâyâmas or some yogic postures or forced meditation for a few minutes and things like that. Without some such 'practices', they would feel they had no 'religion' in their lives. Good heavens! Is there no room for religion in the humble routine of our everyday life?

II

Is there an unbridgable gulf between the secular and the religious affairs of life? Can life be divisible into two segments—the one religious and the other secular? Is religion only an embellishment of a certain portion of life, while the rest of it is infected with ignoble secularity? Is religion an exotic growth, or, a redolent blossoming of life in its native simplicity? I, for one, fail to understand why there should be a cleavage between the secular and the religious in life. Religion pervades the whole of life and not any fraction of it. Religion does not consist exclusively in the doing of certain formal or ceremonial practices, but in sanctifying or idealizing life in its entirety, doing the meanest thing with a sense of unbounded sacredness. The modern humanistic reaction against religion is due mainly to the wrong emphasis we have been putting on what religion is, and our sinister separation of what religion is not. We cannot divide the affairs of life by dichotomy into the secular and the religious. To be truly religious is to feel the sacredness of life at every point and every turn. If religion has become positively hateful today, it is because of its sinister separation of God from the world.

God is attained, not by an ascetic and forcible recoil from the healthy and natural urges of life, but by divinizing life in its natural flow. How deluded are they (and their number is legion) who believe that they are genuinely religious simply because they do some Prânâyâmas (in the popular sense of breathing exercises) every morning or evening or go to temples or churches or mosques on certain fixed days at fixed hours or do some such things which convention regards as religious. It is a pity to see that such people complacently believe that religion has nothing whatsoever to do with the rest of the affairs of their lives—where they suppose they can do anything without any damage to their religiosity, tell any number of lies and do any amount of cheating. It is against this exclusive or departmental view of religion that the modern mind rebels. The modern mind is keenly sensitive to the wickedness of labelling as *secular* all those major interests of life which make for the happiness of the teeming millions, and throw the halo of religiosity round some occult practices and conventional forms of worship and prayer. What is very much resented by the modern critics of religion is its other-worldly attitude. Religion is made to consist in certain exalted practices which stand on altogether a different footing than the so-called secular affairs of life. Against such an attitude a revolt is natural and even necessary. Religion, if it is to survive any more, must be installed in the affairs of everyday life, and not be a thing of inaccessible heights. If God be the inmost truth of life, “the soul of all the worlds”, then we can only find him by a whole-hearted and devotional response to the multifarious urges of life. There is no profit whatsoever in frantic efforts at doing things which

one cannot do by a natural, spontaneous and effortless application of his being. In other words, a deed which one is not *inspired* to do is a misdeed, an unprofitable expenditure of energy. All great deeds—great works of art, profound literatures and philosophies, great discoveries of science—are all inspired. On the breath of inspiration we rise to the highest pinnacles. Inspiration is the inward propulsion, the light that beams forth from within. When we follow the inner urge, we do not go astray, but hit the aim, sure and certain. We act without effort and achieve without failure. We do a thing successfully only when our whole being is attuned to the doing of it. It is this attuning which is of supreme importance in every sphere of life. We observe in the case of a school or a college student who is not *inwardly attuned* to his studies, makes frantic efforts to master his books, studies late hours in the night, but ultimately fails in the examination; while another student with some aptitude and interest, works little, but comes out successful in the examination. This is true *mutatis mutandis* of religious aspirants. The stress laid on Sâdhâna by our ancient sages for the realization of the Goal, is very often taken amiss or not understood in its proper import by many of the religious aspirants in our country. They *forcibly* take to certain practices, meditations, prayers, Japa, worshipping of some idols or some ritualistic performances, which they do *mechanically*, and without any natural and spontaneous response to them coming from the very depths of their souls. Of course, *some* benefit may and must result even from such mechanical application assiduously continued, but surely, the results obtained are incommensurable with the labours put in. Progress,

in any sphere, can only be made along the line of least resistance.

The religious practices in their specialized forms can only be fruitful if they are taken up by the aspirants with ease and spontaneity and are not strenuous *impositions* upon them. Evolution is a tardy process, and spiritual evolution is no exception. The futility of taking up practices too austere for oneself is not properly realized by many. It is a tragic waste of energy to endeavour to do that which one finds *too trying* for himself. How I wish people realized this sufficiently!

It is the sinister conviction deep-rooted in the hearts of men that there is no continuity between the so-called secular affairs of life, our daily toil and turmoil, and the alleged "religious" practices, that is responsible for this tragic waste of energy. What fatal error, to think that the religious life has no point of contact with the ordinary course of our mundane existence! Religion is a quality of the *whole life*, a transformation of life in its entirety and at every point of its stretch. The entire course of mundane existence, in all the richness of its diversified contents, must be lit up with a new light, must be permeated with a sense of sacredness and consecration, must be divinized. Herein we have the A B C of religious evolution. God is the apex of the religious life, but the base is where we are, the humble routine of our daily existence. The *beginning* of religious life is not in *new activities*, but in a *new attitude* towards our everyday activities. I say "beginning" advisedly, for the end as I take it to be is not simply living well or living religiously but *seeing God*. Though many of us are earnest about the "end", we are not careful about the "beginning" nor even mindful of it. We do not take the start where we should and that is

our besetting error. We want to jump to the higher rungs and not ascend to them through the lower rungs, the consequence being that we fall down. We cannot have facility in the higher quietistic practices unless our minds and hearts are purified by honesty and uprightness, by purity of motives and transparent sincerity, in the daily calls of life.

The course of our mundane existence is not a meaningless drudgery, a sheer struggle for existence, of no moment to our religious growth, but the field of religious evolution, the "vale of soul-making".

To live religiously is to transform work into worship, to do our daily work with the utmost purity of heart and soul. It was wisely said, *Laborare est orare*, Work is Worship. "All true work," said Carlyle, "is religion." In work we have an incomparable fountain of purification. The seeking of the Divine does not mean a retreat from the active urges of life, but a fuller and intenser participation therein "with sweeter manners, purer laws". Karma-Yoga is union with the Divine *through work*.

Although Karma, Jnâna, and Bhakti are assigned their proper values in the *Bhagvad-Gitâ* and duly emphasized, yet it is evident from the general tenor of the teachings of the *Gitâ* that Karma-Yoga or spiritualization of work is a necessary propaedeutic to higher spiritual life of Jnâna and Bhakti. The *Gitâ* hints at the obvious fact that activity is the primal and irrepressible function of life. The springs of devotion may be dry in our hearts, the call for quiet meditation may never come to us, our minds may not venture the philosophic quest; but inactive we cannot remain even for a moment. The very maintenance of our being is possible through activity. Activity being

unavoidable, *the most natural beginning in religious life*, is to purify and spiritualize activity. The reason why humanism is now becoming a popular and wide-spread substitute for religion is the exaggerated other-worldliness of the latter which is detrimental to human progress and well-being. It is against a religion deracinated from our human concerns and human problems that the modern mind revolts. "Religious experience," observes Dr. L. P. Jacks, "is woven with all our experience. To isolate it from the rest of our experience is to misunderstand it."² Religious feeling must be brought to bear on our daily concerns and the vital problems of life. "A religion" says Mr. Joad "which the modern man can take seriously must seriously address itself to the needs of the time. If the Western world paid any attention to the religion it professes, it would scrap its armies and navies, close its prisons, sack its judges, and adopt some form of economic communism. These, no doubt, are Utopian projects, but that it should make some attack upon the major evils of our day should not be too much to ask of a religion."³ A religion altogether *déracine* from the intimate concerns of our life and existence stands self-condemned. It is out of relation to life and has no meaning for life. To be religious, we must address ourselves whole-heartedly to the concerns of our lives with such purity and sincerity as to make them a pathway to God. This is the attitude of the truly religious man. It is this attitude, earnestly inculcated in every man and woman, that will bring about a new order of civilization. Religion must become a purifying and an uplifting force in the intimate concerns of our

life and existence. Religion must mean a whole-hearted striving for the happiness of humanity, for the removal of communal and racial animosities, for the growth of international fellowship and sympathy and for a better economic order. Religion must mean an earnest response to the call of suffering humanity, a passionate striving to better the social, economic, and political conditions in which we live and move, in a word, all that will make a better and happier humanity.

Lest I be misunderstood, I wish to make my point of view perfectly clear. I am not advocating *mere* humanism as it is understood these days in the sense of a "substitute" for religion, nor am I opposed to the quietistic methods of approach to God. Surely, God-realization is the crowning consummation of the religious life and *inwardness* is the *sine qua non* of this ultimate goal. But a genuine inwardizing disposition is not acquired by forcible attempts at it, but emerges as the finest fruition of purity of conduct and whole-hearted discharge of moral obligations.

Then only one can *profitably* take to the quietistic methods. Like the bud which slowly unfolds itself, spiritual life is a gradual blossoming. The increasing appreciation of moral values in our daily life, inculcates in us a greater and greater inwardness by purifying our being from the grossness of lower passions and appetites. By a full discharge of all our moral responsibilities in their various shades we acquire purity of heart, and out of the purity of heart wells forth abundance of peace which is indispensable for success in spiritual *Sâdhanâs*. Religion, ere it develops into, in the words of Whitehead, "what a man does with his solitariness", is of necessity, what he does with his gregariousness, his relationships with his society, his country and

² Science and Religion: P. 160.

³ C. E. M. Joad: The Present and Future of Religion, P. 215.

humanity. Swami Vivekananda expressed a profound truth when he said that religion is one with the highest morality. The 'sensus numinis' in every man, which we take to be the very essence of religion, is directly proportional to his moral growth, to the degree he has discharged his social obligations and deepened his sympathies with the needy and suffering humanity around him. Nothing seems to be more irreligious than preoccupation with religious practices and rituals to the neglect of social obligations and duties and the needs of one's own moral perfectibility. Such preoccupation is in its very nature unrighteous and wicked. In accentuating this truth, the present-day "revolt" against religion, is not doing, as many would like to suppose, a disservice, but a valuable service to the cause of true religion.

In all this, however, I am not propounding a new gospel, but an old, old teaching of the *Bhagvad-Gitâ* which now seems to have been deplorably lost sight of by a vast number of Hindus (also, of course, by other religionists) who complacently think themselves religious in preoccupying themselves with certain religious practices and rituals with which they are wholly out of tune, and which they doggedly pursue to the entire neglect of their social duties. The *Gitâ* lays a strong emphasis on an objective and social moral idealism as the very *sine qua non* of spiritual illumination. Writes Prof. Sircar: "The *Gitâ* strikes a note of ethical realism inasmuch as it represents the reality and sacredness of the moral order and the imperativeness of the moral law which none can disturb with impunity. The moral order is not a shadow but is directly centred in the Divinity. . . . The direct touch of God with the moral order has made it possible for the *Gitâ* to transform

moral life into spiritual life. For in the height of our moral being we feel that work is worship. . . . The *Gitâ* is eloquent about the possibility of attaining an expansive vision through the fulfilment of moral order."⁴ (Italics mine). In fact, it is irreligious to ignore the moral order. No amount of preoccupation with the religious practices and rituals can be an adequate compensation for them. If the prevailing religions in the world have become positively hateful today and are sought to be overthrown, it is because they have thrown the moral order in the background. "We in India," says a recent writer, "suffer only too acutely from the effects of our preoccupation with religion and its rituals. But India's so-called spirituality is not really so deep entrenched as many of us would like to imagine. It is a mantle of myth in which our ego attempts to keep itself warm against the cold blasts of misery and degradation. It is something of a protective legend and we take some flattering unaction to our souls in order to screen from our view defects in our social system which we cannot without shame defend."⁵ Similarly Sir Hari Singh Gour wrote recently in *The Daily News*: "The Indian is essentially a religious man. Religious propaganda has obscured his vision to mundane things. He has to correct that perspective if he is to make any intellectual advance in the assimilation of knowledge. His innate pessimism must yield to the glowing optimism of science. His mental outlook must not be backward but forward. He must treat life as a fact and make the most

⁴ M. N. Sircar: *Mysticism in Bhagwat-Gita*, pp. 74-75.

⁵ See the article on "Religion and Social Revolution" by Hirendra Nath Mukerjee in *The Twentieth Century* for Feb., 1936.

of it for himself and his fellowmen. He must dismiss religious obscurantism from the plain facts of existence." And the way out from these sinister influences of Hinduism Dr. Gour finds in "a nation-wide campaign for mass conversion to Buddhism" since "Buddhism," according to him, "is nothing more than Hinduism without its dogmas." Now, there is an unmistakable earnestness in what these writers say, though I will be the last man to concur with their no-religion tendency. There is no denying the fact that quite a large number of people in our country are victims to "religious obscurantism" with an undue preoccupation in certain practices and rituals which profit them little, with an other-worldly and cynical attitude towards things mundane, with a complacent belief that religion consists only in some formalistic routine, and with some wrong-headed notions of renunciation and the nothingness and vanity of things. Such people are far from realizing that to make the most of life for themselves and their fellowmen is the very vestibule through which they have *necessarily* to pass in order to reach the inner sanctuary of religion, and that the fulfilment of the moral order is the necessary condition of spiritual growth. We should avoid on the one hand the Scylla of irreligious humanism, and on the other the Charybdis of blind and indiscriminate acceptance of the mechanical formulas and rituals of institutionalized religions without any regard to one's "individuality".

Today, religion all the world over, is facing a very serious crisis. The "modern" mind everywhere is in "revolt" against religion. It will not do for us simply to dub all modernist movements as satanic and watch them with a lofty unconcern. We should go deep into the very heart of the problem

and raise the question: Why is there this discontent with religion all around? Why is religion losing its hold on the minds of men? It is because religion everywhere in its institutionalized forms has become a mere dead burden of canonical injunctions and practices without any living adaptation to the "individualities" of persons, a mere matter of formal conformity which has proved more a drag on true spiritual progress, rather than a means to it; it is because the empty shells of mere formulas do not bring any genuine spiritual solace to the being of man. Further, the ultra-other-worldly tone of religion which creates an artificial difference between the secular and the religious affairs of life, tends to make man indifferent to social well-being; hence the wide-spread humanistic reaction against religious pre-occupation. Lastly, what is still more intolerant to the rational temper of the age is the obscurantism, the foliage of irrational dogmas and superstitious beliefs, in which organized religion with its appendages of priest-craft and churchianity, seeks a comfortable shelter. If religion has to be rescued from its present crisis and made acceptable to modern minds, we shall have to remove all these taints from its fair face. One thing is now absolutely certain that nothing can stem the tide of protestantism against the excesses and absurdities of institutionalized religions, and that the day of priest-craft and authoritarianism is gone.

The religion that is to be will be a complete breakaway from the cants and shibboleths of organized religions and priest-craft, will do away with the sinister distinction between the "secular" and the "religious", make all work sacred, will recognize the sanctity and religiosity of striving for the commonweal and the service of humanity, and

will be a potent influence in ennobling our social, economic, and political relationships, and above all, will make us approach the problems of God and spirituality from perfectly scientific and philosophical view-points. It will drag us out of the weeds and back-waters of traditionalism into the austere atmos-

phere of critical search, where every individual will be free to make *his own* experiments with Truth, according to his own make-up and his unique "individuality". Religion will not die out as many think, but surely, the old forms are fatally doomed.

HEAVENLY GIFTS

(DIARY LEAVES)

BY PROF. NICHOLAS DE ROERICH

Joyfully we followed all the news and articles dedicated to the glorious celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna's centenary. How wonderful that here on our confused and disturbed earth such unanimous devotional reverence and admiration was possible. And this recognition of the Great Attainment came from various countries, from many entirely different people. All dedications to the Blessed Bhagavân were permeated with a profound love from the heart—it means that the message of the Paramahansa deeply touched the very soul of humanity.

People should rejoice at every such unanimous manifestation, for in it is expressed the striving towards the Good and in this common bliss is already contained a real Heavenly Gift, which mankind should cherish above all ages and nations. And did not the Bhagavân himself, in his goodness, show the example of tolerance and all-containment? If people would only evince more care and reverence for all heavenly sendings, which continuously illumine our dusky earthly life!

Heavenly Gifts in human consciousness are always connected with lightning speed. Everything from the Highest, everything from Above natural-

ly directs human imagination towards light, towards sparkling, towards urgency. And so it is. The greatest realizations can come like lightning, instantaneously. But yet another condition has to be cognized in our earthly understanding. For in these high manifestations was revealed a heavenly language whereas ours is an earthly tongue. Even for the highest conceptions we have but poor clumsy expressions.

If around the concept of Heavenly Gifts we shall gather all our conventional definitions, it will yet be but a weak and limited expression about the Ineffable.

Only the heart will give life to such expressions as solemnity, greatness, ecstasy, tremor, joy. Without a transfiguration through the heart all these best words will remain but dead sounds. Therefore it had been ordained since antiquity that the best gifts should be reverently accepted and dignifiedly introduced into the earthly life.

Love is like lightning, but it must be educated and affirmed in full consciousness, or even this heavenly feeling will be but the tremor of a mirage.

Many epics tell of the sending of Heavenly Gifts into earthly surround-

ings. By such legends the effort was made to warm human light-mindedness and to introduce into the consciousness a worthy understanding.

Heavenly Gifts, if not introduced lovingly and with care into earthly life, will be as torn-off wings, which even despite their magnificent beauty will yet remain cut off. But by the Highest Will wings are given for blissful flights. Without a genuine ardent striving towards spiritual flights man will forget about the wings, which will become dusty amidst the household rubbish. Tiny grey entities will creep out from dark corners to clothe the God-sent magnificence into morbid grey rugs.

Stuffed birds with motionless spread wings always arouse a sad thought that the symbol of movement and highest flights has been nailed down and is thus condemned as a worthless thing in the dust.

The culture of Heavenly Gifts in earthly conditions is a difficult science. Precisely difficult, for this realization is born in labour. And precisely is it a science, because many experiments, many tests had to take place until the Heavenly blossom unfolded itself unharmed in its entire predestined grandeur.

Not only the rare chosen ones are called to care for the blossoming of Heavenly Gifts on earth. In every home there should be a sacred garden, into which the Heavenly Gifts should be brought with the greatest love and surrounded with the best offerings which only the human heart is capable to render.

At times people in despair imagine that Heavenly Gifts have ceased to be poured out. But they do not ponder whether their own eyes are vigilant enough to discern the Invisible Light amidst the glare of the sunshine. Do

not people take refuge from blissful rain under an umbrella? And do not people flee into dungeons from purifying thunder storms and from majestic waves of Light?

Do not people try to make a small thing of the Greatest? And how sad it is when Heavenly Gifts—these generous beautiful treasures are cast to derision or locked up in the safe of a miser!

These deniers will try to invent all imaginable excuses to shift on anyone else their own ignorance and rudeness. Little physical effort is needed to tear off a beautiful flower. And in the same way is very little coarse force required to defile the highest Heavenly Gift. But if anyone will argue that this is already a common place, let us reply with the words of Vivekananda: "If you know what is good, then why don't you follow the ordinances?" In these significant words thunders a direct challenge to all who violate and abuse the Highest. And is this question nowadays not most imperative?

If anyone will tell you that it is unnecessary to repeat, answer him: "If something useful is not applied, one has to re-affirm it!" A discussion whether help should at all be rendered, would be immoral. Everyone will agree that one should always help. This means that if somewhere something most precious is being neglected, then one should endlessly reiterate it as long as one's voice lasts. And if anyone sees that a humanitarian principle is violated by ignorance or malevolence, it is his duty to point this out, if only he himself understands wherein are true values.

Heavenly Gifts are multifarious. Generously and magnificently are these beautiful helpers sent to assist humanity. The shower of Bliss is poured in benevolent generosity but only drops of

this treasure reach. But every thought about Heavenly Gifts already strengthens the heart. Especially now when

human hearts are in such confusion and deep pain, one should strive after the highest panacea—after Heavenly Gifts.

“Thy benevolence fills
My hands. In profusion it is pouring
Through my fingers. I can not
Keep all. I am not able to distinguish
The glowing streams of richness. Thy
Benevolent wave pours through the hands
Upon earth. I do not see who will gather
The precious gems. The tiny sprays
Upon whom will they fall? If only I could
Carry home the Heavenly Gift.”

HINDUISM IN BURMA

BY SWAMI JAGADISWARANANDA

Burma is, both geographically and culturally, a part and parcel, a projection and portion of the Indian continent. This *Suvarna-Bhumi*, or the land of gold, as tradition calls it, has been professedly Buddhist ever since the introduction of the Faith in her soil in the early centuries of the Christian era. *Hinayâna* Pali canon or the Southern School of Buddhism is the religion of the people in general. It was also the State religion of Burma till the early eighties of the last century when she lost her independence. This beautiful country owes its religion and philosophy, art and literature, culture and civilization, and in fact everything, to the Blessed One, His Dharma and Samgha.

But as Hinduism prevails in the main land Burma could not escape the influence of the Hindu religion. Burma had in the long past, as in the present, close commercial contact with India. Hindu maritime activities which commenced before the Christian era and which culminated in the establishment

of Hindu colonies in the South-East Asia had their repercussions on the coast of Burma as well. Small trading principalities such as Prome, Rangoon, Pegu and Thaton probably came into existence as a result of the Hindu expansion overseas. Hindu traders who had migrated to Burma brought with their merchandise their deities for worship and installed them in temples. “It is probably their shrines” says Mr. G. E. Harvey, I.C.S. in his *Outline of Burmese History* “that form the original portion of such pagodas as the Shwemawdon at Pegu, the Shwedagon at Rangoon and the Shwezayan at Thaton.” Mr. Niharanjan Roy, in his very interesting work on early Indo-Burmese historical and cultural relations,—which is the first of its kind—rightly remarks that Hindu elements in Burma seem to have made their mark as early as the sixth century A.D. and continued to have its share of influence on the people till the fourteenth. It is to be noted that the Hindu element was mainly confined to the Hindu immi-

grants only and could not influence the population at large as in Siam, Cambodia, Indo-China, and other Hindu colonies in the Far East. It seems that there were occasional struggles between Hinduism and Buddhism as indicated by the following tradition. At Pegu there was a King named Tissa who was a staunch admirer of Hinduism, if not an actual adherent. He made no obeisance to Buddha but honoured the Brâhmanas. He forbade the worship of the Blessed One on pain of death and cast all images of Buddha into the river. But by the fervent devotion of Bhadradevi, the daughter of a Talaing merchant, for Buddha he was converted into Buddhism and eventually made Bhadradevi his consort. Though Hinduism, like Buddhism, could never be popular in the Burmese world as in many Hindu colonies in South East Asia, it is at the same time true that certain traces of Hindu rites and rituals and myths and traditions got interwoven into the texture of the social and religious life of the country. For instance the Burmese children even now keep a tuft of hair which is made into a knot on the top of the head after the fashion of the Hindu children of North India. There are some other Buddhist traditions and customs that appear to be most probably adaptations from Hindu ones.

Hindu influence is also indicated by the names of some places of Upper and Lower Burma. Brahma-Desha, the oriental name of Burma, has also been derived from the primal Hindu Deity, Brahmâ. A tradition runs that a Sakyan Hindu Prince of Kapilavastu, Avi by name, came to Upper Burma by way of Manipura with a large number of attendants. He established the town of Tagaung on the banks of the Irrawady. He christened this country as Brahmadesha or the Land of Brahmâ

after the name of the Hindu god of creation. Old Prome was in ancient times a centre of Vishnuite influence. So it was called Bissunomyo, which is equivalent to Vishnupura or the city of Vishnu. It is also referred to as Sri-kshetra after the sacred name of modern Puri, a stronghold of Hinduism on the other side of the Bay. A Burmese chronicle tells that the ancient city of Prome that yields the oldest Pali inscriptions in Burma was founded by Rishi Vishnu with the help of the son of Visvakarmâ, the divine architect and six other divinities namely Indra, Nâga, Garuda (his Vâhana), Chandi, Parameswara, and Gavampati. This helps us to understand that Hindu traditions of town-planning and temple-building were at work in those days. The town of Taungdwin, founded about the middle of ninth century A.D. was called Ramavati after the name of the epic hero, Râma. The old name for Pegu, a prosperous town not far away from the city of Rangoon, is Ussa which is but a corrupted form of Odra or Orissa. This shows that Pegu was once colonized by the Orissans. The consorts of the chiefs of Shan States were titled Mahâdevi which proves the penetration of the Hindu influence.

From the archaeological discoveries of Hindu deities and temples it is understood beyond doubt that Hinduism played a significant part in Upper Burma. The only ancient Hindu temple now extant in Burma called the Nat-hlaung temple is situated at Pagan in the heart of this Buddhist country. It is now in a dilapidated condition and some of its images are very much defaced and deformed. The presiding deity of the shrine is Vishnu himself seated in Padmâsana on his carrier bird Garuda in the main sanctum. Four images of him stand at the four sides of its square obelisk at the

centre of the vaulted temple. Its walls and niches are adorned with stone images of the ten principal and other subsidiary incarnations of Vishnu. The temple was built by the Buddhist King Anawrahta of Pagan for the honoured Hindu priests of his court who were astrologers and who used to take a prominent part in the performance of all rituals and ceremonies of the court. A Tamil inscription of the twelfth century A.D. found at Myin-pagan says that a porch to this temple was added by a South Indian native of Malabar named Sri Kulasekhara Nambi who was a devotee of the Vaishnava saint Kulasekhara. From an inscription on the temple, Hultzsch says that it was very well known to the Vaishnavas all over Burma. Hindus from various parts of the country used to go on pilgrimage to it. Monsieur Charles Duroiselle, sometime Superintendent, Archaeological Survey of Burma, asserts that the temple is at least ten centuries old. The image of Vishnu, the main deity, is now housed in the Berlin Museum.

As Bhagavân Buddha has been incorporated in the Hindu Pantheon, He is also one of the ten Avatâras that adorn the niches in the walls. The Varâha image is with his consort Bhudevi. The Narasimha figures have six hands each with sharp nails to tear off the body of Hiranyakasipu. The representation of Râma is a standing image of Tribhanga variety, in other words, with three bends in the body. Parasurâma holds in four hands the Parasu, Khadga, Vâna and Dhanu as the *Agni purana* describes the divinity. Kalki, as the *Vaikhânasâgama* states, carries in his four hands Sankha, Chakra, Khadga and Khetaka. Matsya, Kurma, Vâmana, or Trivikrama images are of traditional type. The last one is of

Suryanârâyana as the Vedic Surya has been identified with Vishnu.

A bronze Vishnu image now at the Pagan Museum has been found at Pagan by a Buddhist monk. It is the Bhogasthanaka Murti of Vishnu one foot high with a Udarabandha or a belt round the belly. A celebrated King of Pagan, Kyanzittha by name, as a legend goes, was in one of the former births a sage named Vishnu, living contemporaneously with Buddha, and on another occasion was born in the family of Râma, King of Oudh. He also claimed his identity with Vishnu. Kyanzattha was the son of Anawratha, the founder of the famous Vishnu temple at Pagan. He styled himself as the Tribhuvanâditya Dharamarâja in imitation of the name of Vishnu who in his Trivikrama Avatar placed one foot on Bhuloka or the earth world, another on the Antarikhsa loka or the mid-world between heaven and earth and a third on the Pâtâlaloka or the nether world. Vishnu was worshipped by the Hindu colonists of Burma as early as the seventh century A.D. Daily worship of Nârâyana-Silâ was in vogue among the Brahmins. Several Vishnuite icons have been unearthed near old Prome. They are probably the oldest specimens of the Hindu sculpture of Burma. One of them is peculiar as its features do not conform to any known textual canon of Pratima-Lakshman or Rupamandalan. For in it Vishnu and Lakshmi stand side by side. Vestiges of Hinduism have also been traced in Thaton and other deltaic districts of Lower Burma. Two Archaeological finds of Vishnuite sculpture from Thaton represent the well-known Ananta Sayya episode of Vishnu. The scene also pictures the other deities of the Hindu Triad. A similar plastic representation of the popular mythology of Vishnu has been found near old

Prome. A multitude of Vishnu images have also been explored in various parts of the country. From all these it may be ascertained that the popular Hindu God Vishnu was able to penetrate into the tangle of traditional legendary history of Burma. Siva and Brahmâ, the other two Gods of Hindu Trinity, also exerted some influence in Burma. Some stray finds of Lingams and of Saivite Gods in stone and bronze have been made from time to time.

A Saivite dynasty of a long line of Kings appears to have reigned from the fifth to the tenth century A.D. in Arakan. In the hilly buffer region between India and Burma coins bearing Saivite symbols, that is the trident of Siva on the reverse and the recumbent humped bull on the obverse, have been found. Col. Phayre in his "Coins of Arakan, Pegu and Burma" remarks that at least two lines of Kings ruling at Arakan were known as Chandra dynasty, in the local legendary history. It was reported by the Archaeological Survey of Burma in 1926 that the names of a number of Hindu Kings adopting the surname Chandra, such as Bama Chandra, Priti Chandra and Vira Chandra have also been deciphered in a Devanagari stone inscription found at the Pagoda of Mrohaung. Coins bearing Vishnuite symbols on one side and Saivite ones on the other have also been found in Arakan as well as in Burma. They belong in the view of Colonel Phayre to a period from the 6th to the 8th century of the Christian era. Mon. Duroiselle finds "an irrecusable evidence of strong Hindu influence in early times in Arakan, and of an early Hindu settlement at its capital city, Mrohaung or in its vicinity." In fact there were found on a hill situated close to it remains of a Hindu Temple out of the debris of which many damaged and disfigured

Hindu-Gods have been recovered. Numismatic evidence has proved that the Hindu Kings of later Gupta and early Pala period had close contact with Mrohaung. Mr. Twu Sein Ko, late Superintendent of Archaeology in the country, has often urged the existence of the Linga Cult of Hinduism in Burma evidenced by the finds of Siva-Lingam. A Hindu scholar of Burmology has observed that Vishnuite and Saivite Hindu temples once existed at Thaton wherefrom 14 or 15 stone relief panels roughly weathered have been brought and preserved in the museums. They contain indistinct images of Hindu divinities such as Hanuman, Siva, the Bull Nandi, Mahisâsura (the Buffalo demon), Siva-Pârvathi, etc.

Images of Brahmâ are rare not only in Burma, but also in the main land. Perhaps only at Ajmere an independent temple was dedicated to Brahmâ. Out of the several images of Brahmâ found in Burma two are important. They are now sheltered in the museums at Rangoon and Pagan. Both are seated in Padmâsana with folded hands. They are represented with three heads covered with matted locks, beautifully dressed in the Jatâmukuta fashion crowned with floral ornaments. Some images of Brahmâ are carved in a very low relief in the faces of the interior square pillars of the Manuha and Nanpaya temples at Pagan. Ganesha, Surya and other minor gods also found favour with the Hindu population in Burma. Ganesha with his bulging belly and protruding nose was a favourite god of the Hindus in Burma, as the god of success and of the Buddhists as the guardian deity of their shrines. One icon of Surya found at Mrohaung is pictured as seated with two goddesses Usa and Pratyussa, in a seven-horsed chariot with Varuna as the driver. He wears a bodice and jewels in his legs. His

two hands carry two full-blown lotuses and his head is adorned with Kirit-mukut. It resembles the image of the Sun-god at Konarak near Puri.

Hindu elements are profusely present in the early Mon inscriptions of Burma. Hinduism like Sanskrit Buddhism is equally responsible for the frequent use and occurrence of Sanskrit religious terms, royal names and titles and even certain social observances. According to these ancient Burmese records the Hindu Brahmins had great influence in the Buddhist courts. They were also free to adore their favourite God Nârâyana. The Brahmins were not in the exclusive enjoyment of this privilege, for freedom of worship was also extended to the Hindus of the other three castes. An early inscription says that the four castes of the Hindus shall fulfil their Dharma too. Brahmins took prominent part in the religious ceremonies of the Kings and performed characteristically Hindu rituals. Some Mon inscriptions, throwing much light on this point, may be summarized as follows: At the auspicious time of the Godhuli Lagna the Hindu astrologers bathed the seventeen pillars. They made in all the ten directions decorations of plantains adorned with sugarcane. They arranged vessels of gold and silver full of water. They poured water in conch-shells wherein they put cleaned rice and Durbâ grass. They made altar oblations and altar candles in honour of Nârâyana and worshipped him with flowers. An essentially Hindu custom was observed in connection with the Buddhist coronation ceremonials presided over by Brahmins. Daughters of Brahmins with other maidens had spun the thread and made on them 108 spools wherewith the Brahmins bound up the pillars. It is also added that the Brahmins who knew the *Vedas* fulfilled the Brâhmana Dharma. Brahmins used to

offer boiled rice in cup-shaped vessels with candles stuck in them. At the time of worship the expert Brahmins used to wear loin-cloth and wrapper with white skirts. Worship of the Hindu God Nârâyana seems to have been an indispensable item of all court ceremonies. In this connection it is interesting to note the history of the Ponas who originally came to Burma from Manipur (Assam) in the days of the Burmese Kings. The term Pona was originally used to denote the Brahmins. It has now lost its original significance. The Manipuri Brahmins were brought captives as Manipur as well as Assam were once temporarily annexed in 1819 to Burma. The Ponas were greatly honoured in the Burmese courts as well as in Burmese society, as versed in astrology and priest-craft. Most of them embraced Buddhism and to all appearance are Burmese Buddhists. Still they have clung to the appellation of Ponas. A section of the Rangoon city even now goes by the name of Pona Basti. The descendants of the Ponas are not many in number at present and can still be seen in Upper-Burma, particularly in the town of Mandalay. Some of them are living as nail-cutters.

Andhra-Kalinga played an important part in the early history of Burma. Pali inscriptions found at old Prome are in a script very closely allied to the Canara-Telugu script of the 5th and 6th centuries A.D. Hindu merchants of Andhra-Kalinga country settled in Lower Burma and by the establishment of marital and domestic relations with the local aborigines created a race called Talaings. People of Lower Burma are still called Talaings. The term used as early as the 10th century A.D. in Mon records is derived from Telingana or Trikalanga. The name used to mean almost the whole Andhra-Kalinga, or Telugu zone. Some scholars think that

Talaing script is but a derivation of Telugu script. The Talaings educated and civilized the Burmese aborigines. In Upper Burma admixture of the Hindus and the local people produced what may be called the Burmese race. The South-Indian Pallavas seem to have intercourse with the Royal dynasty of old Prome. Two names, Sree Prabhu Varma and Sree Prabhu Devi, titles of the then reigning King and Queen, have been found in an inscription of old Prome. The Royal title of the Pallava dynasty well-known in South Indian History have the name-ending Verman. Old Prome, and for the matter of that Lower Burma was dominated during the 6th, 7th, and 8th centuries by a dynasty of Kings, named Vikrama, who were probably Hindus. The dead body of the Vikrama Kings used to be burnt and the ashes buried in big urns having inscriptions on them, from a study of which the knowledge about the Vikrama dynasty has been derived.

In the 13th century Pagan fell from power with the invasion of the Mongol army of Kublai Khan and along with its fall Hinduism began to decline in Burma. The condition of Hinduism on the main land at that time was anything but vigorous. The larger part of India had by then been subjugated by the Mohammedan invaders. The proselytizing zeal of Islam was then at a white heat, and Hinduism suffered irretrievably through the vandalism and iconoclasm of the invaders. Religious injunctions prohibiting sea-voyage brought the Hindu maritime activities to a standstill and thus spelt the ruin of the Hindu colonies overseas. Having fallen on evil days Hinduism could not keep up its contact with its offshoots across the seas. Cut off from the vitalizing current of the main body the branches gradually withered away and Hinduism

in Burma eventually disappeared in the 14th century. For about 500 years, from the 14th to the 19th century Hinduism was almost extinct in Burma. After the annexation of Burma to British India, Hindu traders again flocked to the land of gold and revived Hinduism. This fresh Hindu migration synchronized with the Hindu awakening in India. During the last half century the Hindu population in Burma has swelled up to about 6 lakhs. Throughout Burma the Hindus are now seen in all walks of life earning good reputation as doctors, lawyers and educationalists. The Hindus have erected a number of Temples in the capital city of Rangoon and in other parts of the province. In Rangoon there are big temples dedicated to Siva, Mahâvir and other Hindu gods. The Hindu communities from different parts of India have their respective shrines where they congregate for worship. The Temple erected by the Chettiar community at Tambe, a few miles from Rangoon, and that built by the late Râjâ Reddiar in the heart of the Rangoon city, deserve special mention. The Hindus also take pains to celebrate their religious ceremonials with processions. There are Durgâbâris in Rangoon, Moulmein, Yenaungaunn, and Bassien, conducted by the Bengali Hindus, where they observe all the important festivals. Mother Durgâ is worshipped in earthen image or Pratimâ in many towns of Burma. Hindu religious teachers from different parts of India also visit Burma from time to time.

The Rangoon Branch of the Ramkrishna Mission is playing no mean part in popularizing the Hindu religion and culture among the people of Burma. The Mission conducts a charitable hospital in Rangoon, which is one of the biggest in the province. Relief work during flood, earthquake, and other natural

catastrophies, and other humanitarian activities have popularized the Mission and, through it, Hinduism in Burma. Burmese leaders of thought and culture gladly preside over and speak in the meetings held to celebrate the anniversaries of the Hindu saints. The Mission also conducts a free Rest House and a free Reading Room and Library which are also very popular. For the dissemination of Hindu religion and philosophy regular discourses are held by the monks of the Mission and other Hindu religious organizations. The Provincial Hindu Mahâsabhâ has been doing good work in Burma by upholding the cause of Hinduism. Though the Hindu-Buddhist marriage is a long standing problem yet no attempt was made to solve it. During the last session of the Provincial Hindu Mahâsabhâ of Burma the question was taken up and a strong committee has been formed to devise means for legalizing the marriage between the Hindus and the Burmese Buddhists. Nor are the Hindus unmindful of education. The Library of the Rangoon University is the munificent gift of a Hindu millionaire. Hindus of all ranks contributed liberally to the University building fund. Three High Schools, namely the Bengal Academy, the Reddiar Institute, and the B. E. T. School, are run by the Hindus and are meant mainly for the Hindu boys and girls. There is also a number of minor schools in and outside of Rangoon maintained by the Hindus.

Papers in Bengali, Hindi, Gujrati, Telegu, Tamil and other Hindu languages are run in Rangoon. Many associations of the Hindu communities have been formed to safeguard and promote their religious interests. It should be remembered that the religious ideas of the Hindus have not influenced the people of modern Burma to any appreciable extent. The days of the Burmese Kings when Hinduism enjoyed considerable influence are now over. Burma by virtue of her geographical position has become the meeting-ground of various races and cultures. This commingling of races at the present time has brought about profound ethnic changes and cultural fusion in Burma. The position of the Hindus will be quite different in future Burma separated from India. Hence the Hindus should lose no time in cementing the cultural link that has been built up between Burma and India in the course of the last half century. Cultural and religious unity of India and Burma has been a bit strengthened by the election of the well-known Buddhist monk Bhikku Ottama as the President of the last session of the All-India Mahâsabhâ. Leaders of Hindu thought and culture should see that centres of Hindu ideas and activities are started in the near future in Burma and other countries with Hindu colonies for the preservation and propagation of the Hindu religious and philosophical ideas.

THE OTHER WORLD

BY PROF. E. E. SPEIGHT

The glory of our human kind
 Is the rare music of the mind
 That from its mortal prison-bars
 Commingles with the very stars.

A folded arm, a glance upthrown
 At some wild songster swiftly flown,
 A sudden waking in the dark,
 The brief ascension of a spark,
 May set ajar a secret door
 And make us free for evermore
 Of an undreamable domain,—
 The world that in a drop of rain
 Gleams and is gone, the paradise
 That in a note of music lies,
 The realm of lovely imagery
 One single word may come to be.

The things we do from hour to hour
 All unaware, may lead us there;
 There is no purity or power
 But streams out from the Great Unknown
 Into the soul, as winds intone
 Triumphantly the liturgy
 Wherein all life doth blend,
 That was from the beginning
 And shall be unto the end.

THE MESSAGE OF MOTHERHOOD

BY KSHITINDRA NATH TAGORE, B.A.

THE MESSAGE

As Bhagiratha of Ancient India brought down the sacred river Ganges from the high peak of the Himalayas and converted the Aryâvarta into a veritable green garden, so the American poet of modernism, Walt Whitman, opened out a new vista of thought in the New World and introduced a new trend of ideas into the heart of the West, when with a full heart and forceful voice he sang a paeon of praise for the motherhood of woman in the following strain :—

“I am the poet of the woman, the same as the man.

And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man.

And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of men.”

It is difficult to express this idea better in any other form. To try to do it, would only mar its forceful beauty. It is perhaps only in the divine literature of Ancient India, and of no other country, that one comes across the glory of motherhood described in such a magnificent language. It must, however, be said that even Whitman has placed the woman on the same level with the man, when he says in a negative way that “there is nothing higher than to be a mother of men.” It was only the sages of Ancient India, the land of sacred traditions, who had fully realized the true greatness of woman and did not naturally hesitate to utter not merely a negative truth regarding her, but enunciated a posi-

tive truth, when they said that "because of her privilege of being a mother of children, she deserves our full respect, esteem and blessings too; it is she who brightens the home; woman is the presiding goddess of prosperity in the house—in fact, there is no difference between her and the goddess." (Manu)

THE IDEAL OF THE RISHIS

None but the sages of yore could utter the words so radiant like sunshine and at the same time so soft like lotus-leaves. Whitman's vision did not go beyond considering her as the mother of men. It is the Aryan Rishis alone who felt themselves gratified and blessed by having the privilege of divine vision to look at woman both as the mother of men and as the presiding goddess of the hearth and home. The Rishis having themselves realized this noble truth showed humanity at large the easy way to attain this high ideal by advising them to look at the wives of other people as one would look upon one's own mother. It is through their incessant efforts and advice that this noble sentiment regarding the womanfolk has, as it were, entered into the very marrow of the Hindu race. It has succeeded for centuries in protecting the Hindu society from the dreadful havoc of sexual immoralities. It is to be regretted, however, that this noble sentiment is fast disappearing into oblivion, and the traditional teaching about the sanctity of a woman's person is going to be a thing of the past, while the Western nations, although they seem to be unable to measure the height and the depth of this lofty sentiment, are going ahead towards this goal, the key to peace and happiness. The Western mind is awakening, though slowly, to the undoubted wisdom of the sublime conception as treasured up in India's sacred books.

A MISCHIEVOUS SUGGESTION

That this lofty ideal is in these days losing its hold on the Hindu mind, has been due to the present-day wrong system of education, so different from that introduced by the Rishis. The wisdom of the Rishis enabled the Hindu society to take its stand on high ideals. It is, however, the fashion nowadays to say that one can carry on one's life's duties without the least help from religion, or rather Dharma, the basis of those high ideals; nay more, by throwing Dharma out one would be none the worse. Could there be a more mischievous suggestion? The Aryans of India always used to keep Dharma before their eyes in all their spheres of life and consequently India obtained the high reputation of being the abode of eternal peace and happiness. The change that has come over the country today is simply unthinkable. How rapid has been her fall from that height of moral excellence, which, for centuries, had dominated the minds of its people. We, the descendants of the pious Aryans of Ancient India, do not now hesitate to banish Dharma from all our acts!

GOD-CENTRIC SYSTEM OF DUTIES

The Rishis of yore based all their teachings on Dharma, the underlying basis that supports or upholds a man in his struggle for his uplift, physical, mental and spiritual. It is nothing short of God-worship. The Rishis knew that all knowledge comes to him, who is a humble seeker of the knowledge of God—"The knowledge of God is the foundation of all knowledge." Their motto was: "Destroy Dharma and it will destroy you, preserve Dharma and it will preserve you." Keeping this motto in mind, they have bequeathed to us a God-centric system of duties that enables one, waking or dreaming,

to preserve Dharma and to keep God in the forefront of every act of one's life.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEN AND NOW

If, however, we do not care to follow the wise precepts inculcated by the sages, but in our inordinate pride and vanity, ignore them and thus bring disaster upon our homes, our Rishi-forefathers would not certainly be to blame for that. They have given us such a panacea for all the ills of life, that we, their ill-fated descendants, in spite of hundreds of cruel blows, have not succumbed to spiritual death, but even when dying, try to bring a new era of ideas into this world with renewed vigour and energy. As a result of having drunk deep of their spirituality, we, even in these degenerate days, are taught from our very childhood to look at woman as we would upon our own mother. Sitting as they did on the high pedestal of Dharma, the Rishis fully realized the grandeur of the conception of the motherhood of God and also of the motherhood of His image, the woman, and proclaimed to the world that woman, specially another's wife, should be looked upon as one's own mother. In order to create a deep-rooted habit of respect towards womankind, the Rishis understood that posterity should be brought up on this high ideal. With this view they taught people to address every woman in respectful and courteous terms, e.g. "Sister", "daughter", or "mother". But as the result of modern education, we have ceased to pay much heed to this precept, however excellent it is, or to the inherent good instincts of the heart; but pressing into our service all sorts of quibbling and fallacious arguments and specious reasonings of an undisciplined mind, we persuade ourselves into thinking that a

woman is after all nothing but a woman. We have lost the spectacles bequeathed to us by our forefathers, who taught us to see woman in the light of a mother.

WHY DOES DHARMA SOUND BITTER TO SOME?

It is only natural to us, the so-called educated Indians of the present time, that it should not be palatable to listen to religious precepts at every step or to link every act of our life with God-centric Dharma as our forefathers did. The reason is not very far to seek. We only seek ease and luxury; we have come to like too much frivolities of all sorts, and as its inevitable consequence, we go mad after physical beauty; we wish to excel in things which inflame our passions and naturally lead us to see woman in no other light than merely as a lump of flesh. To such people and to those of our countrymen who for want of foresight do not hesitate to introduce into India the maddening ball dance and similar other social customs of the West likely to bring moral famine in the East, it is needless to say, such advice to bring every act of life under the chastening and purifying control of God-centric moral injunctions would surely sound bitter; to them, the message of the motherhood of woman would no doubt sound harsh and out of tune in these disjointed times. Their motto is—"borrow money, eat hard, drink hard and be merry." Most of them do not find time to think even, to what immeasurable depth of ruin their country is gradually sinking by following their example and precepts. They want to live always in the dreamland of pleasures.

DHARMA ALWAYS LEADS TO GOOD

It is only fair to admit that many a well-wisher of the country is of opinion

that to remind a boy of Dharma and of the moral duties incidental to it in all acts of his life, is more than not likely to make him precociously wise or hypocritical. Labouring under this error of judgment, they fail to enter into the spirit of what the Rishis taught and without the slightest hesitation accept as gospel-truths many teachings of the West, that are plausible but injurious in their effect. We, on the other hand, unhesitatingly say that the effect of the rules for the conduct of life laid down by the Rishis, is to bring steadiness and gravity of character, but not precociousness; deep repentance for acts of impiety done, but certainly not hypocrisy. The Rishis have not placed any ban on innocent pleasures and amusements, they have not advised us to practise religious observances at the sacrifice of health, physical or mental. What they want to emphasize is that to enjoy all things conducive to morality and to hold fast to the God-centric Dharma can only lead to good and nothing but good.

HISTORY OF MANKIND BEARS TESTIMONY

The history of mankind bears ample testimony to this truth. Did Nero, Emperor of Rome, do good or immense mischief by his beastly anti-moral sexual indulgences and cruelties of the most inhuman kind? Who have done greater good than those high-souled saints who sacrificed their own precious lives in order to hold high the banner of the gospel of truth? How many Alcibiadeses succeeded in bringing about the revolution in the realm of thought that one Socrates could do by dint of his deep spiritual character? Which can be said to be the greater benefactor of mankind—the Puritans of England notwithstanding their bigotry, or the Stuart kings of England? There are

hundreds of men who can point with pride to the sublime and immortal verses of the puritan bard John Milton, as being the means of elevating their lives. But how many men there are who can boast of living highly cultured lives by following the doctrines of Brummel, the leader of fashion of his time? Did not the influence of George the Fourth sow seeds more of evil than of good in the social life of England? On the contrary, how much the morale of the English Society has been elevated and purified by the example of her ideal life of purity and morality set before her subjects by Queen Victoria? She, as sovereign of her people, maintained the purity of her court with the utmost strictness and rigour.

CONCLUSION

With all these examples before us, if one still refuses to believe in the good effect of Dharma, we do not know how to impress it on one's mind. It is, however, the bounden duty of every believer in God-centric Dharma, in religious and moral education as leading to all-round good, to instruct everyone to cultivate only those subjects that are interdependent on Dharma and to have every act of his interwoven with it, and not to remain apathetic in holding high the torch of Dharma. Its path is often very slippery, and it requires watchfulness and constant practice to stand steady in it. The sages of India have therefore enjoined upon us to practise Dharma like one in the grip of grim death. We, in conclusion, appeal to the sons of India to realize God as the centre of our life and thus allow Dharma to permeate all the acts of our life, physical or mental. It will then be possible for us, descendants of the hoary sages, to look upon the woman as upon our own mother, to carry the

message of motherhood to every hearth and home, not only in this country, but throughout the world, and thus put the crown of the highest glory and honour on the head of our motherland, as the Rishis had done in the golden days of yore, and herald the advent of an age of enduring peace.

THE UNIVERSITY OF PARIS PAYS TRIBUTE TO VIVEKANANDA

BY JEAN HERBERT

A few days after the successful celebration in Paris, in the Musée Guimet, of the centenary of Sri Ramakrishna, the "Sorbonne" paid a splendid tribute to Swami Vivekananda.

Under the chairmanship of Professor Fouché, member of the Institute of France, over 200 people assembled on March 30, 1936, in the auditorium of the "Institute of Indian Civilization" to hear a lecture by Professor Paul Masson-Oursel, and a few words by Miss Josephine MacLeod and Swami Yatiswarananda.

Professor Fouché opened the meeting by heartily welcoming Swami Vivekananda and his teachings into the great centre of learning. Dr. Eliet then informed the audience that those teachings would be studied by a group now in process of formation under the leadership of Swami Yatiswarananda. She also stated that the French translation of the four *Yogas* and also of *Inspired Talks* and various other works by Vivekananda would now be published in rapid succession; she felt sure that the various volumes would meet with the same success as the first pamphlet which had already come out (*My Master*).

Professor Masson-Oursel, who holds the chair of Indian philosophy, chose as his subject "Vivekananda, the disciple of Ramakrishna". The following is a summary of his lecture, which was listened to with very keen interest.

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"I should like first of all to express my great admiration for Romain Rolland's books, which made both Ramakrishna's and Vivekananda's names known in the West; seldom has a Westerner shown such loving understanding of the East. But since those two great Bengalis were the first Indian religious teachers with whose experiences and doctrines Romain Rolland became acquainted, it was naturally difficult for him to realize all that they had in common with many great ancient, and possibly also contemporary, sages in India.

"Ramakrishna and Vivekananda are stars of the first magnitude in the sky of Indian spirituality, but it would be unfair to India and to Indian tradition to consider them as the only luminaries in that sky, nor would it add to their fame or influence; they themselves would be the first to acknowledge gratefully all that they owed to the genius of their race and of mankind as a whole.

"Vivekananda should be studied only in conjunction with his master Ramakrishna. The contrast between the two men was striking. They belonged to two different castes. Whereas Ramakrishna was an ascetic, given to ecstasy, he was an athlete, proud of his physical vigour as well as of his great artistic talent which would have enabled him to become a remarkable professional musician. He was very keen to accumulate knowledge and wisdom, and became not only a Pandit, but also a man well-versed in Western science and art and culture. His religious ideas were at first the exact opposite of Ramakrishna's. He was rather sceptical, not at all sure that God did exist.

"His soul was content with a strict positivism, à la Auguste Comte; he was a materialist. We may therefore place him in his youth as a very modern, and even modernizing Hindu. We must remember that in this he was no exception among the great thinkers of his country. Most of them have considered it essential that they should build up their own spirituality themselves and not take it ready-made from some

other man or school. And there is probably greater value and merit in the Indian idea that one can start from nothing and acquire a spiritual soul than in the Western idea that we have such a soul already and we cannot use it.

"He was a member of the Brâhmo-Samâj and read Spencer and Stuart Mill. He refused to choose between Indian and Western culture or to sacrifice either of them to the other. In that he was both a product and an opponent of Hindu prejudices.

"He was seventeen when he was brought to Ramakrishna, as a singer. There is little doubt that his musical training and capacities played a large part in preparing him for a life of spirituality.

"He first met Ramakrishna's ideas with flat contradiction. It is said that his conversion dates from the moment when the sage, intentionally, touched him with his foot. That decisive contact made the young man shed his negative and materialistic attitude. His Guru's influence, however, did not deter him from enquiring further into the West, and making his mind always richer. During his first journey to America and Europe, in 1893-95, he made a very sensational appearance in the "Parliament of Religions" in Chicago. In the U.S.A. he found the European mechanistic conception of life carried much further than in Europe, and always taking men further and further away from the plane on which the Indian world was still moving. He saw the effects of material science and of industrialization, which gave as violent a contrast with India as could be imagined. He had been well prepared however, and although he learnt much, he had no reason to be surprised.

"When in England, he felt no political bitterness. What opposes man to man never had any appeal for him. In British public opinion he rather saw a possible instrument for propaganda in favour of India. And perhaps that happened to be a wise and fruitful policy, politically.

"On the way back, coming through Europe, he met Max Müller and Deussen. He landed in Colombo in 1897, and he set to work to build up the Ramkrishna Mission. He had already toured India as a youth. Now he toured his country as a man and a prophet. In 1897 he even made Western disciples in India.

"His earthly life ended with grandeur. Not only did he know the appointed time, he also felt a moral obligation to die. And we may probably say that he passed away of his own accord, in that state of Samâdhi, or ecstasy, which his Guru had so passionately loved. His death was no common death, and cannot be accounted for by any particular human reason. He freed himself from the bonds of human life when he had learned all that he had to learn, when he had achieved all that he had to do.

"We can understand Vivekananda only if we know Ramakrishna. The Guru had taken his *raison de vivre* from the *Bhagavad-Gitâ*. One man had wanted to walk in one life the full length of each of the four paths which the *Gitâ* says lead to liberation. And as if it were not enough to live to their end each of the four yogas, Ramakrishna had also wanted to live each one of the various religions known in his country. By that he did not mean simply to become an adept of each, but actually to re-live the life of the great prophets. He became not a Moslem, but Mohammad himself, not a Christian, but Jesus himself, just as he became Kâli and Râma and Krishna and all the other forms which the Absolute has taken in the Indian world.

"That experience cannot possibly be judged or appreciated from our plane of life and thought. Unless Ramakrishna was only a visionary given to ecstasy, we may say of him not only what was said of Spinoza, that he was intoxicated with God, but that he *was* the God who was both the basis and the goal of his religious experience.

"What did that leave for a disciple to do? First of all to follow in the footsteps of the master and go through his experiences. Vivekananda was the perfect disciple. We do not know whether he actually reached the point which Ramakrishna had attained, but even if he had, that would only make him a second Ramakrishna, it would not make him original. He made, however, a new and personal contribution in his conception of Dharma.

"Although that one word corresponds to our various notions of religion, right, duty, and many others, it does not mean that the Hindus do not distinguish between those notions; it means rather that they also have an idea which we do not have, and which cuts across, so to speak, all those concepts. The idea is that there are various deep

strata which it is in nobody's power to create, but of which we should sometimes point out the urgent necessity. That faith in the Dharma has existed ever since Vedic times, and it is quite commonplace.

"Another idea which is very common in India is that spirituality is the essence and the basis of all that we call civilization, politics, &c., which should flow from it quite naturally and healthily. Vivekananda's personal experience was to realize that although he alone could not solve all the riddles of India, the task could be accomplished if he took as a basis Ramakrishna's religious experience, which he had shared to a certain extent. Had it not been for Ramakrishna's manifold "*Erlebnis*", Vivekananda could only have been one of those modern-minded Hindus such as we meet in Paris and an artist into the bargain.

"Vivekananda's work was twofold: he was to advocate in his country all that could usefully be borrowed from the West, and also something more which we shall see later,— he was also to reveal to the West that if we do not want to fall back into barbarism, we should not lose all touch with spiritual life.

"To Western audiences, there was no special difficulty or merit in advocating Indian ideas and ideals, but where Vivekananda showed great courage and originality was in the fact that he defended not only Sankara (for whom Spinoza had stood already) but also Kâli, and the Tantric rites and all the rest. He did not edulcorate Hindu religious creeds and turn them into a rationalized concept for the benefit of Western minds, he claimed to be as modern and up-to-date when worshipping Kâli as any American architect when building a sky-scraper.

"In India he did not only uphold the utilitarian advantages of physics and chemistry and the other sciences. He also advocated the betterment of material conditions, the elimination of poverty, famine, &c., and showed that such improvements, far from impeding spiritual progress, should further it. He fearlessly told his people to "get rich" and he believed that by doing so he was serving his country.

"He was convinced that all religions are equivalent. Ramakrishna was the only man who had a right to say that, because he knew it through a full and personal experience of every one of them, and therefore his disciple did not defend that ideological syncretism which without Ramakrishna's experience would have been devoid of all value. Similarly Vivekananda could and did say: we must all be brothers, but let us keep our differences; just as Ramakrishna had been able to live religions which are different.

"When Vivekananda proudly claimed his Aryan origin, Mongolian blood, and a negroid element which was in him, he meant that he had *lived* the negro, and the Indo-European and the Mongolian, just as Ramakrishna had lived Krishna and Jesus and Mohammad, and that he did not deny any of them.

"Although Vivekananda followed the four Yogas, he was mostly a Karma-yogin. He claimed to be an adept of the most monistic form of Vedânta. For us, that is only one of many metaphysical systems, and many great exponents of it have nevertheless belonged to some particular religious cult or other. But for Vivekananda the Vedânta had become also a social and political activity. What is important for him is Unity, that unity of mankind is far more valuable with all the differences that exist than when robbed of them. His Vedânta is therefore without Mâyâ, he has made it a means for social action. What he values in monism is its catholicity. In social thought and action, the Vedânta has been for Vivekananda what art has been for the Tagores.

"From the point of view of sheer ideas, Vivekananda without Ramakrishna would have been nothing but a propounder of what was already known; backed by the experience of Ramakrishna, which he extended and broadened, he became a prophet.

"From a practical point of view, he spread horizontally what in Ramakrishna was remarkable by its depth. Instead of seeing spirituality in renunciation, he saw it in brotherly love."

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Miss Josephine MacLeod then gave, in French, a few reminiscences of her meeting in America in 1895 with Swami Vivekananda.

Swami Yatiswarananda, clad in the garb of the Order, then addressed the audience:

"Sisters and Brothers, I look upon it as a great privilege to be present here in this great centre of learning and culture, and to take part in the celebration organized in

connection with the birth-centenary of Sri Ramakrishna. And I take this opportunity to offer you all heartiest greetings on behalf of myself and of the Brotherhood I have the honour to represent.

"I come to you not as a stranger, but as one who, following the teachings of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, believes in the exchange and assimilation of the best in the culture of the East and of the West, as one who feels a kinship with those whose hearts beat to the spiritual tune and yearn after the realization of the Truth which is neither Eastern nor Western but is the goal of us all.

"I did not have the privilege of meeting Vivekananda. In 1906, four years after the Swami's passing away, both Ramakrishna and Vivekananda came to me at the same time, in the form of their teachings, when I was a student at the University. The first books that brought me the message were "*The Gospel of Ramakrishna*" and Vivekananda's "*Rajâ-Yoga*". I became more and more interested in the literature; later I came in touch with the monks of the Order which I finally joined a few years afterwards.

"It was my good fortune to receive spiritual instruction from Swami Brahmananda, the "spiritual son" of Ramakrishna, and also to know intimately many of Ramakrishna's other great disciples. I carry on my head also the blessings of the Holy Mother, the partner of Ramakrishna's divine realization and glory.

"Sri Ramakrishna was a great gardener who reared many flowers of the rarest kinds and gathered them all in his basket. Vivekananda was certainly the greatest of them all but there were others also who were unique in their own way. Sitting at the feet of many of those great ones, this is what I have learnt—that Ramakrishna and Vivekananda were not separate entities. They were, really speaking, a twofold manifestation of the same Divine Principle and Power.

"Ramakrishna was like the silent cloud that gathers the storm and Vivekananda was like the thundering cloud that spreads it all around. It is impossible to separate the two. In Ramakrishna, the ancient ideals of Vedânta realized themselves in a silent and quiet way. In Vivekananda they became more dynamic and widespread. It was he who spread the message in India and carried it to Western lands.

"The mighty spiritual current that had its origin in the quiet temple of Dakshineswar on the banks of the Ganges inundated the whole of India through Vivekananda and has brought a new inspiration and awakening to the country, stimulating the spiritual life of people and urging them to serve their fellow-men more than ever.

"In order to understand the message of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, we must take a synthetic view and acknowledge that it is not enough for us to realize spirituality in individual life. The Divine whom we try to realize within us as the Soul of our soul must also be realized in the collective life through creative service. We must try to promote our individual well-being and at the same time to work for the good of others.

"We live in a world where people want to be saviours to others without knowing how to save themselves. Ramakrishna and Vivekananda teach us that we must first of all learn how to help ourselves, and then alone may we be able to help others. The message, to put it briefly, is this:—First, let us ourselves be divine, and then help others to be divine."

ATMABODHA

BY SWAMI SIDDHATMANANDA

(Continued from the May issue)

रागेच्छासुखदुःखादि बुद्धौ सत्यां प्रवर्तते ।

सुषुप्तौ नास्ति तन्नाशे तस्माद्बुद्धेस्तु नात्मनः ॥ २३ ॥

रागेच्छासुखदुःखादि Attachment, desire, pleasure, pain, etc. बुद्धौ सत्यां when the mind exists प्रवर्तते arise; सुषुप्तौ तन्नाशे नास्ति (Attachment etc.) do not exist in dreamless sleep the mind then being destroyed तस्मात् therefore बुद्धेस्तु (the attachment etc.) belong to the mind न आत्मनः not to the Atman.

23. Attachment, desire, pleasure, pain, etc. arise when the mind exists i.e., exist only in the waking and dream state; they do not exist in dreamless sleep, the mind being then absent; so they belong to the mind and not to the Âtman.

प्रकाशोऽर्कस्य तोयस्य शैत्यमग्नेर्यथोष्णता ।

स्वभावः सच्चिदानन्दनित्यनिर्मलतात्मनः ॥ २४ ॥

यथा As अर्कस्य of the sun प्रकाशः light तोयस्य of the water शैत्यम् cold अग्नेः of the fire उष्णता heat स्वभावः characteristic feature (तथा so) सच्चिदानन्द existence, intelligence, bliss नित्यनिर्मलता eternal purity आत्मनः of the Self (स्वभावः real nature).

24. Existence, intelligence, bliss, and eternal purity are the essential nature of the Âtman as light, cold, and heat are of the sun, water, and fire respectively.

आत्मनः सच्चिदंशश्च बुद्धेर्वृत्तिरिति द्वयम् ।

संयोज्य चाविवेकेन जानामीति प्रवर्तते ॥ २५ ॥

(जीवः Jiva) आत्मनः सच्चिदंशः existence and consciousness of the Self बुद्धेर्वृत्तिः च and the functions of the mind इति द्वयम् these two संयोज्य combining together अविवेकेन through want of discrimination च expletive (अहं) जानामि इति प्रवर्तते acts as the cognizer.

25. Through want of discrimination Jiva combining these two—the existence-intelligence of the Self and the functions of the mind acts as the cognizer.

आत्मनो विक्रिया नास्ति बुद्धेर्बोधो न जात्वपि ।

जीवः सर्वमलं ज्ञाता कर्ता द्रष्टेति मुह्यति ॥ २६ ॥

जातु At any time अपि expletive आत्मनः of the Self विक्रिया न (अस्ति) there is no modification बुद्धेः बोधः न (अस्ति) the mind has no consciousness (of its own); जीवः सर्वम् अलम् verily Jiva itself (acts as) all of these ज्ञाता experiencer (of pleasure and pain) कर्ता doer द्रष्टा seer इति मुह्यति gets deluded (as these).

26. Neither the Âtman ever undergoes any modification nor has the mind ever any consciousness of its own; verily, Jiva itself, under delusion, acts as all of these—experiencer (of pleasure and pain) doer and seer.

रज्जुसर्पवदात्मानं जीवं ज्ञात्वा भयं वहेत् ।

नाहं जीवः परात्मेति ज्ञातश्चेन्निर्भयो भवेत् ॥ २७ ॥

रज्जुसर्पवत् As a rope is mistaken for a snake आत्मानं जीवं ज्ञात्वा regarding oneself as Jiva भयं वहेत् (one) suffers from fear; न अहं जीवः I am not Jiva (अहं) परात्मा I am the Supreme Self इति ज्ञातः चेत् if known thus निर्भयः भवेत् (one) becomes free from all fears.

27. A man suffers from fear, mistaking himself as Jiva as a rope is mistaken for a snake; he becomes free from all fears if he can know that he is not Jiva but he is the Supreme Self.

आत्मावभासयत्येको बुद्ध्यादीनीन्द्रियाणि च ।

दीपो घटादिवत् स्वात्मा जडैस्तैर्नावभास्यते ॥ २८ ॥

दीपः घटादिवत् Like a lamp illumining jars etc. एकः alone आत्मा Âtman बुद्ध्यादीनि the intellect etc. इन्द्रियाणि च and the senses अवभासयति illuminates; स्व आत्मा the Âtman Itself जडैः तैः (बुद्ध्यादीनीन्द्रियैः) by the intellect etc. and the senses which have no consciousness न अवभास्यते cannot be enlightened.

28. Like a lamp illumining jars etc., the Atman alone illumines the intellect etc. and the senses; the Atman cannot be revealed by them as they have no consciousness (just as a lamp cannot be illumined by jars etc.).

स्वबोधे नान्यबोधेच्छा बोधरूपतयात्मनः ।

न दीपस्यान्यदीपेच्छा यथा स्वात्मप्रकाशने ॥ २९ ॥

यथा As स्वात्मप्रकाशने for revealing itself दीपस्य अन्यदीपेच्छा न (भवति) a lamp does not require the help of another lamp (तथा so) आत्मनः बोधरूपतया consciousness being the essential nature of the Âtman स्वबोधे for revealing Itself अन्यबोधेच्छा न (भवति) does not require any other knowledge.

29. As a lamp does not require the help of another lamp to reveal itself so the Âtman whose essential nature is consciousness does not require any other knowledge for revealing Itself.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

The opening article is an unpublished writing of Swami Vivekananda. . . . In the last two issues we have discussed some ideals of education which are suited to the conditions of India. In this month we deal with *The Education of the Masses in India* and offer some suggestions for the uplift of the teeming millions in India. . . . The article

on *Hinduism and Buddhism* by Prof. Dr. H. V. Glasenapp was originally written in German and contributed to a German magazine. It deals with the subject philosophically and historically, hence it may be of interest to our readers. . . . *A Luminous Soul of India* is a speech which Dr. Frederick B. Robinson, President of the College of the City of New York, delivered on

the occasion of the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Celebration, held last March in the New York Town Hall. . . . In *The Religion We are born in* Prof. Shrivastava discusses some fundamental points of religion and religious life as viewed by all mystics, teachers, and prophets of the world. . . . Prof. Nicholas de Roerich makes some valuable observations in connection with the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Celebrations in his *Heavenly Gifts*. . . . Swami Jagadiswarananda makes a detailed study of the Hindu influences in the past and in the present in *Hinduism in Burma*. . . . *The Message of Motherhood* is from the pen of Mr. Kshitindra Nath Tagore, who criticizes the modern attitude towards women. . . . Mr. Jean Herbert, who is now translating Swami Vivekananda's works into French, gives us an account of how *The University of Paris pays tribute to Vivekananda*.

HARKING BACK TO PAST

It is a paradox of history that man never rests at any point of the historical process and yet he never ceases to cast wistful glances at an idyllic past. And the while he believes he is reviving the past he is, in fact, moving away from it. Whether the process is one of steady progress, or a gradual *untergang* or a vicious movement in a circle man has always been swept off his feet by the inevitable flux. The forward step, if it avoids old ills and solves old problems, brings in its train new ones. In course of time the present misery becomes unbearable and seems almost inescapable, and man tries to cry a halt to the movement and longs to return to the past undisturbed by the nightmares of the present. We are witnessing a similar case in those who seem to be sick with an industrialism that

threatens Frankenstein-like to destroy its creators and who would fain return to the days of the eighteenth century village economy. It is a profound fallacy. We do not mean that progress is to be measured by *taklis* or by spinning jennies. We are not taking so cramped a view. If there be such a thing called progress taking a comprehensive view of civilization it obviously lies elsewhere.

What is pertinent to the question is a distinction of the things of permanent and of changing values and a tracking down of the root of the evil. Certain values are permanent for human society. Such are certain, moral, aesthetic, and spiritual values which will endure to the last days of humanity. Along with them there are ideas and objects which embody only fleeting values. They are more or less accidental, being products of changing needs and circumstances. It is futile to attempt to arrest their mutability. It is idle to suppose that the historical urge can be stopped or that man's spirit of innovation and enterprise can be extinguished. Besides, it is usually the case to contrast the ills of a present system with the benefits of a past one* while forgetting the merits of the former and the drawbacks of the latter. Much of the charm for the past would melt away if it could be envisaged in its totality. Most of our fascination for the past feeds upon our failure in historical imagination. What again is to blame—man or his creation? Are unemployment and misery inevitable accompaniments of the machine? Is not what is necessary only a new adjustment? The selfish greed of a few is exploiting a system that is capable of alleviating human want and misery to a considerable extent. It is no good blaming institutions which can be worked both ways. The Gandhites condemn machine

as the cause of unemployment and spiritual degeneration, the Marxists call religion the opium of the people. What is the truth, Pilate?—ask the bewildered. Nothing captures our imagination more than forest glades, thatched huts and mountain springs, but we believe the world is peopled with men and men. Happily or unhappily India is a modern country by the grace of time and space. She can hardly ignore the happenings round her. While the cottage industry has immense potentialities for the present in Indian economy it is unwise and fatal to decry and retard the industrialization of the country.

RELIGION AND MORALITY

There are discernible in the present thought-texture of the world two strands which almost run counter to each other. On the one hand there is an ever-growing tendency to accept nothing that is not revealed by a diligent search after truth; on the other an ever-increasing emphasis is being laid on ethical and religious values regarding which all questions of truth and falsehood are held to be strictly impertinent. The last century ushered into being a new science called axiology which started a systematic enquiry into the nature and problem of value. It is now held that our sense of the good, the beautiful, and the true is arrived at by way of a judgment of value and that it is irrelevant to enquire into their truth or falsehood. They are held to be fundamental. Values are thus shown to be valueless. Thus morality has no other sanction beyond its own 'imperatives'. Another thing noticeable in such discussions is the fairly common confusion of religious and moral values. Morality is held to be the essence of religion, and at

times religion has been identified with social morality.

Such are the results of a sense-bound intellectualism which fails to penetrate the husk of Reality. It is cold comfort to learn that morality has no superior sanction and that religion is more or less a got-up affair to fortify the moral inclinations of the individual, a shadowy prop to social ethics. It is difficult to imagine how such an obviously shaky position can be maintained for long. Even granting that as social good ensures individual good, the individual will be inclined to respect social morality, how can such a conception inspire men with enthusiasm to do more than what is strictly necessary and to bridge the difference between society and society, nation and nation, race and race? It is a confession of intellectual failure to understand religion. Religion is more than morality. It is true moral discipline is an indispensable pre-condition of religious life, and religious experience issues out into finest moral sentiments and behaviour, yet religion is neither moral nor non-moral. It is amoral in its highest flights. Religion ends in mysticism which affords an insight into the heart of Reality that transcends all moral and non-moral aspects of the world. But while the vision of unity transcends all these bounds, it at the same time affords the true basis of all morality. It shows that man must rise ever higher and higher in moral behaviour to reach the core of truth. Morality is an expression of the underlying oneness. The nobler it is, the more finely does it reflect the Truth. Here then is the sanction of morality. Religion gives meaning to ethics; it alone can sustain moral endeavour. Without a living faith in a spiritual principle it is as vain to lead a moral life as it is profitless to build hopes on sand.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI. By Sister Devamata. *Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta, Los Angeles County, California.* Pp. 88.

The quest after Spirit has made the author a wanderer all her life. She has travelled to numerous sacred places and bowed at different holy shrines. Among her pilgrimages two stand out pre-eminently in her memory. The most vivid one is her visit to Dakshineswar and a few other near-by places connected with the life of Ramakrishna; the other is her sojourn at Assisi, the native place of St. Francis. She weaves these two memories into one in the present work. It is no biography of the saints, nor any comparative estimate, for she humbly disavows any "thought of comparison in putting these two Great Ones side by side". She has loved them both, and she believes that those who love the one will learn to love the other and thus a new link would be forged between the East and the West. She contents herself by merely pointing to their great similarities in life, method, mission, message and teachings and also a few differences between them, imposed by difference in time, country, and traditions. Of the Italian saint she says: "Had Francis been born in India instead of in Italy, he would have been acclaimed a Divine Manifestation. No being ever embodied more perfectly in both life and character the Christ-Spirit or the Christ-Ideal that did Francis. The stigmata set their seal on his Christhood."

TALES FROM THE MYSTICS OF THE EAST. By General Parakram Jung Bahadur Rana, *Kitabistan, Allahabad.* Pp. 133. Price Rs. 2-8.

This excellently got-up volume has strung together some fifty anecdotes from the lives of the various mystics of the East, all of which reveal the common view-point of mystics. An intense yearning for God and a burning spirit of renunciation shine out from the tales garnered from the stories of saints widely separated in time and clime such as Janak, Kabir, Nanak, Mira, Jaidev, Bahlol, Shamash, Hasan, Shibli, Sanjir, Bayazid, Attar, and a few others. The

mystics know not only how to love God with a flaming passion but also how to express their love in exquisite expressions. Words leap from their mouth with the easy grace and spontaneity of water spouting out of fountain-heads in delicate showers. There are passages in the book, which are sure to captivate the reader by sheer literary charm apart from their mystical appeal. Said Imam Hasan to his father when the latter had confessed to her multiple affections. "Father, is it a heart that you possess or a traveller's home that shelters so many affections. The heart is one and it can accommodate only one." A mystic's heart has no room for harbouring any affection other than that of God. All the tales ring with the same note.

THE STORY OF MIRABAI. By Bankey Behari, B.Sc., LL.B. *Published by the Gita Press, Gorakhpur.* Pp. 96. Price As. 10.

The story of Mira Bai forms one of the most fascinating chapters in the history of saints. Buddha's renunciation has usurped popular imagination, but compared with Mira's it pales into insignificance. Born in the ruling family of Marwar and married to the heir-apparent of the proudest royal family of Rajasthan, she spurned the princely pomp and magnificence, patiently bore all the humiliations heaped upon her and wandered alone to Brindaban for the sake of her beloved Lord. Legends have shrouded her figure in mystery, but the melody and the poignant pathos of her devotional songs have made immortal and kept vivid the intense charm of her personality. It is a pity that such a theme has fared no better treatment than the one we have here. True, the author is out to relate Mira's story not history. Nevertheless what one gets here is fairly common knowledge easily picked up from hearsay in India. The information that is spread over some odd ninety pages could have been easily crammed in half a dozen, the rest being the author's none too happy philosophizations. Readers who delight in ruminating on sentimental outbursts may derive some interest from the work, but one who thirsts for intimate acquaintance with one of the most remarkable saintly characters in history will be

sadly disappointed. The book is got-up well and illustrated with a number of coloured pictures.

KALYÂN KALPATARU. VEDĀNTA NUMBER, JANUARY, 1936. *Printed and published by Ghanshyamdas at the Gita Press, Gorakhpur. Pp. 248. Price Rs. 2-8-0.*

The Gita Press has once more earned the gratitude of the public by bringing out this excellent symposium on Vedānta. No less than fifty-seven contributions on various aspects of Vedānta, some from the pens of eminent scholars, are contained in it. Some offer illuminating comments on various aspects of Vedānta. It is chiefly concerned with the different phases of the non-dualistic (Ādvaita) philosophy, though other systems have received some attention. Deserving of individual mention are, Bhagavan Sri Sankaracharya on God, Soul, and the Universe

by Sri Sankaracharya of Govardhan Mutt, Puri ; Sri Ramanuja and his system of Philosophy by Sankaracharya of Conjeeveram ; The methods of Vedic knowledge by Aurobindo ; Misconceptions regarding Sankara Vedānta by Mahamahopadhyaya Ganganath Jha ; On Waking and Dreaming Worlds in Sankara Vedanta by Pandit Kokileswar Shastri ; Misconceptions about Vedanta by Basanta Kumar Chatterjee ; Sivoham by Principal Sheshadri ; Sankaracharya's Analysis of Experience by Prof. S. V. Dandekar ; Tantra and Vedānta by Prof. Chintaharan Chakravarti ; Vedantic Truth by late Atal Bihari Ghosh. There are two articles on Nimbarka philosophy and on the life and philosophy of Vallabhacharya. Several passages from scriptures and Sankara are appended at the end. The magazine merits a permanent place in any philosophical shelf.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA BIRTH CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

PROVIDENCE

The Providence Birthday Celebration of Sri Ramakrishna was opened early on the 21st February last at 7-30 A.M. over the radio when Swami Akhilananda, speaking for the Ministers' Morning Devotions, gave a talk on the Spiritual Experiences of Sri Ramakrishna. That afternoon at 3, the Swami, speaking over a different radio station, read to the invisible public the message of Swami Vivekananda on Sri Ramakrishna, and spoke on Sri Ramakrishna and Future Civilization.

A Committee called the American Centenary Celebration of Sri Ramakrishna had been formed during the winter. It comprised, besides the American Swamis, of such outstanding figures as Professor William E. Hocking of Harvard University, Rev. Ivan Lee Holt, President of the Federation of Churches of Christ, Rev. Frederick B. Fisher, President of the Council of Free Churches of America, Rev. Jabez Sunderland, Professor Franklin Edgerton, Head of the American Oriental Society, Professor Millar Burrows, President of the American School of Oriental Research, Rabbi Israel Lazaron and others. The chairman of this

Publicity Committee, Rev. Frederick A. Wilmot, Universalist Minister and Religious Editor of the Providence Journal, wrote three appreciative articles on Sri Ramakrishna portraying him vividly to the Western mind.

On Sunday, February 23, a large gathering of about 300 came together at the Plantations Club, a big auditorium in the centre of Providence, to hear ministers of different religions speak on mysticism. An unusual spirit of harmony and goodwill toward one another and toward Sri Ramakrishna could be noticed among the ministers. After a short violin recital by the expert technician, Professor Henri J. Faucher accompanied by Mme. Marie B. Faucher, Swami Akhilananda opened the meeting by reading to all the message of good cheer from Swami Akhandanandaji. A Catholic monk, Father Chandler, struck a high spiritual note by his beautiful exposition of the stages of divine love as portrayed in the life of St. Thomas Aquinas showing the attainment of God to be the highest human goal. This was followed by a very interesting account by Rabbi Braude of the charitable life of Rabbi Israel, the Master of Goodname. Rev. Ralph Harpole depicted practical mysticism in the Protestant

Church from the life of Horace Bushnell. An entertaining note was then brought in by Rev. Frederick A. Wilmot's definition of mysticism, which he followed by a talk on Sri Ramakrishna bringing out with sympathetic understanding the idea of the harmony of religions. Swami Akhilananda then spoke on the mysticism of Sri Ramakrishna stressing the fact that man must experience or realize God before he can become truly religious. The subject was drawn to a fitting close by Dr. Joachin Wach, formerly of Leipzig University and now Professor of Comparative Religions at Brown University, speaking on the Unity of Eastern and Western Mysticism, when he remarked that "mysticism denoted the harmony of man above his national and social barriers."

The glorious birthday was spent in worship according to Hindu rights.

The following day, the message of Swami Akhandanandaji, the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, India, was broadcast by the Press on the radio over the whole of the United States. There were brief addresses on various phases of the life of Sri Ramakrishna by the five Swamis present and a few prominent American friends. Swami Akhilananda opened by giving the early life and spiritual background of Sri Ramakrishna. Swami Paramananda continued by telling of the Master and other Religions. Here Rev. Frederick A. Wilmot spoke a few words on Sri Ramakrishna's Influence on the West, which was followed by a discussion of His Practical Teachings by Swami Vividishananda. The points of Sri Ramakrishna's Contribution to the Christian World were noted by Rev. Allen E. Claxton, Methodist minister, in a very clear, deep talk showing much careful thought and was appreciated by all. Swami Nikhilananda told in an interesting way about the Master and His Disciples. This was followed with a few brief words by Professor Robert Casey, Professor of Comparative Religions at Brown University, on Eclecticism and Exclusiveness in mysticism and a word of appreciation of the Philosophy of Sri Ramakrishna by Professor Arthur Murphy, Professor of Comparative Philosophy at Brown University. Swami Gnaneswarananda ended with a quick, lively little story bringing out the different temperaments of religious aspirants in the East and the West and left with the

company a thought tersely and strikingly expressed that, "Sri Ramakrishna is Power," and "It Works"—that this power works for us in every phase of life; after which he gave a little Hindu music.

On Wednesday Swami Akhilananda again read the message of Swami Akhandanandaji over the radio and gave a talk on Sri Ramakrishna. In the evening a gathering of friends enjoyed more music by Swami Gnaneswarananda interspersed with informal discussion and refreshments.

Harmony of Religions was the topic of Swami Akhilananda over the radio on Friday, February 28. In the evening there was another large public meeting at the Plantations Club. This time, four Swamis delivered lectures on Sri Ramakrishna and His Influence which did much to spread acquaintance among the public. After Swami Akhilananda opened the meeting, Swami Paramananda, speaking first, told about Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master of India. Swami Vividishananda stressed the Harmony of Religions as shown by the life of Sri Ramakrishna. That a combination of mysticism and practical qualities is not only possible but admirable was brought out interestingly and clearly by Swami Gnaneswarananda. While, by Swami Akhilananda, Western Psychology and Mystic Experiences were set over against each other and given their relative values illustrated from the sublime life of Sri Ramakrishna.

The week of celebration proper ended on Sunday, March 1st. At a meeting in the evening, after a little violin music again by Professor Henri J. Faucher accompanied by Mme. Marie B. Faucher and vocal music by Miss Ruth Webber accompanied by Mrs. Curry, Swami Akhilananda gave a lecture on India and Her Master illustrated by slides that made the members of the audience desire immediately to leave for India with the Swami in a large party.

The two regular lecture nights of the following week were devoted to questions on Sri Ramakrishna, which brought out many interesting points and angles of vision new to the West. Then, on Sunday, Swami Akhilananda lectured on Sri Ramakrishna and Modern Problems.

The celebration was thereafter carried to Philadelphia and to St. Louis by Swami Akhilananda where, in both places, he delivered a number of special lectures on Sri

Ramakrishna, which interested and drew many people.

MEETING AT THE BROOKLYN INSTITUTE

On the 18th April last, Swami Nikhila-nanda and Mr. Dhan Gopal Mukerji were invited to address a meeting of the Institute of Arts and Sciences in the Brooklyn Academy of Music in further celebration of the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary. Mr. Stansbury Hagar, Vice-president of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center and one of the directors of the Institute, introduced the speakers to the members and guests who filled the large hall. Swami Nikhilananda gave an account of the childhood of Sri Ramakrishna, of his more and more introspective approach to life during his youth, and of the period of burning spiritual zeal and highest realization at the Temple of Dakshineswar. In the various episodes of his Sâdhanâ, the Swami emphasized Sri Ramakrishna's innate purity and complete self-surrender at the feet of God, which finally enabled him to illumine the hearts of his disciples and lead them to the great monastic ideal of renunciation and service. This ideal led to the subsequent founding of the Ramkrishna Mission, which was to be of such far-reaching importance in bringing the East and West together. The philosophical significance of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings was presented to the public in clear outline in the latter half of the Swami's address. He laid stress on Sri Ramakrishna's loving and intimate relationship with God, which has made Him accessible to us all: his recognition of God as being both with form and without form; the relation of God to man, and the four cardinal points of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings: the Oneness of Existence, Divinity of Man, Unity of God and Harmony of Religions. The response of the audience to the message of the Master was immediate and enthusiastic.

Mr. Dhan Gopal Mukerji, following the Swami, related many beautiful and interesting reminiscences from the lives of the Holy Mother, Girish Chandra Ghose, and Swami Turiyananda, to illustrate the power of Sri Ramakrishna in transforming the lives of his disciples. He showed how the Holy Mother, who had spent the days of her pure and simple childhood in a small village, became the virtual head of the monastic order of the Ramkrishna Mission as a result of the exqui-

site and painstaking training given to her by Sri Ramakrishna from the first day that she came to join in his life of spiritual dedication. He told of how even a man of the world like Girish Ghose became one of the most holy and illumined saints of his time, one whose talents as a dramatist were to be an inspiration to millions of Hindus in the field of religion, through the influence of the Master. And finally Mr. Mukerji described Swami Turiyananda's tremendous austerities, his complete conquest over the ailments and sufferings of the body and his high state of realization.

It was felt that a new field of interest had opened up for those who had the good fortune to attend the Centenary meeting at the Brooklyn Institute.

PORTLAND, OREGAN

The Centenary celebration of Sri Ramakrishna was opened on the 28th March last, at 8-30 P.M., with the presentation of a playlet called, "The Light from The Beyond," in the Commandery Room of the Masonic Temple, before an enthusiastic and respectable gathering of more than three hundred people. The play, in two Acts and three Tableaux of the goddess Saraswati, Mohammed and Madouna, was adapted by Swami Devatmananda, from the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. This sublime subject was presented in the picturesque and colourful setting of oriental costumes and religious chants. In the first Act Girish Chandra Ghosh, the poet and dramatist, described how his life was transformed by Sri Ramakrishna. It was then followed by expositions of such subjects as, 'How to Live in the World,' 'Hope for the Imperfect One,' 'Sin and Worship of Fear,' 'Image Worship,' 'Harmony of Religions,' etc., by Sri Ramakrishna. The climax of the play was reached in the last Act, in which the various pilgrims, the Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, and Mohammedans, met at the Altar of Truth, chanting their respective prayers, and singing the chorus, "Truth is One, In Unity we meet, etc., Together God's children, worship at His Feet. The Pure in Heart shall see God, for Truth is One." (Adpt: Beethoven, Op. 13) composed for the occasion. As they all laid their offerings on the Altar and with a happy heart sang and mingled together, demonstrating that Truth is One, Sri Ramakrishna standing beneath the Light of Truth, looked on with a smile of gladsome approval, and the right hand raised in way

of benediction. Miss Frances Pozzi of the Portland Symphony Orchestra, presented several numbers on the Harp.

On Sunday, March 29, at 11 o'clock in the morning, a devotional Service was held, in the Chapel of the Vedic Temple, 1206 N.W. 25th Ave., when Swami Devatmananda addressed the full hall on "Sri Ramakrishna, the God-Man". It was preceded by a period of silent meditation and appropriate musical programme.

At 6-30 P.M., a banquet was held in the Banquet Hall of the Masonic Temple, when Hindu dinner was served to more than hundred people. The Memorial meeting was promptly started at 7-45 P.M., when more people began crowding in the hall. The Toast Master, Mr. Ralph Thom, of the Bank of California, called the meeting to order with a few appropriate words explaining the purpose of the gathering. He then introduced Dr. Norman F. Coleman, ex-President of Reed College, who spoke eloquently on "Our Debt to India". Dr. G. B. Noble, of the same college, then spoke on "A Western View of Sri Ramakrishna". Swami Devatmananda was finally called upon to address the gathering. He spoke on "Sri Ramakrishna, and God-Intoxication". The talks were interspersed with musical numbers, vocal and instrumental both, presented by noted artists. Floral offerings, including one hundred red roses, added charm and grace to the place; and a large painting of Sri Ramakrishna prominently displayed was the centre of attraction.

On Sunday, April 5, at 11 o'clock in the morning, the regular service was held in the Chapel of the Vedic Temple, when Swami Devatmananda spoke on "Sri Ramakrishna, His Spiritual Practices". A special feature of the musical programme was a song composed for the occasion and dedicated to Sri Ramakrishna. In the evening, at 8 o'clock, the Swami gave an illustrated talk in the Corinthian Room of the Masonic Temple on "The History of the Hindu Religion in Pictures," with the help of lantern slides. This graphic and thrilling presentation was immensely enjoyed by the whole audience that filled the hall.

CHICAGO

The Vedanta Society of Chicago commenced the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Celebration on the 1st of February last. Its book-table welcomed the appearance of its

centenary publication, "Ramakrishna the Man and the Power". Hundreds of copies of the book were either presented or sold to friends of the various Vedanta Societies, all over the United States. Next followed the publication of a series of newspaper articles announcing the significance of this world-wide celebration, giving special publicity to its programme in the foremost evening paper of Chicago, which attracted the notice of many Chicagoans to the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Celebration of the Society. The visiting Swamis arrived one after another with their friends.

Friday, March 20, witnessed the function of the celebration—Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Banquet.

The number of reservations rose higher than was originally expected. Consequently the banquet was switched from the Tropical Room of the Medina Club to the Grand Ball Room of the same building. The beautiful banquet hall with sumptuous floral decorations and festive candles on every table presented a gorgeous sight. Gradually the hall was filled with nearly two hundred guests. The speakers' table was tastefully placed on a raised platform in front of a huge mirror. Dr. Lake, the toastmaster, with his lady; Dr. Scherger and his wife; Dr. Preston Bradley; and also the Swamis Paramananda, Akhilananda, Nikhilananda, Vividishananda and Gnaneswarananda in their orange coloured robes occupied their allotted seats at the speakers' table, which commanded an atmosphere of awe and reverence, quite in keeping with the spirit of the celebration.

A picture was taken of the huge gathering, and the liveried waiters started to serve the food. The five Swamis rose to chant a Sanskrit grace, the English translation of which was given by Swami Paramananda. The guests enjoyed the delicious food and the courteous service.

After dinner Swami Gnaneswarananda, the leader of the local centre, introduced Dr. Lake the toastmaster and turned over the meeting to him. Madame Joan Young, celebrated singer, sang two songs, after which Swami Gnaneswarananda was called upon to read the inspiring messages from Swami Akhandananda, the President of the Ramakrishna Order, Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi and Romain Rolland, which were received with great enthusiasm.

Introduced eloquently by the toastmaster the speakers rose and were jubilantly

applauded. Swami Paramananda in his calm and dignified manner spoke of the meaning of the advent of Sri Ramakrishna. Dr. Scherger spoke feelingly on the depth of the culture of India. Swami Akhilananda expounded the scientific value of the spiritual experiences of Sri Ramakrishna. Swami Vividishananda presented with dignity and composure the universality of the message of the Master. Dr. Preston Bradley arose in the midst of deafening cheers and spoke eloquently about the need of spiritualizing modern culture and conveniences. It was nearly midnight when Swami Nikhilananda arose yet he was heard with great eagerness when he pointed out the fact that the message of Sri Ramakrishna was potent enough to save the world from war and destruction. The function terminated after midnight with a vote of thanks to the honored guests, proposed by Swami Gnaneshwarananda. The guests returned home with an impression to be cherished long in their hearts.

The celebration ended with a symposium of four lectures delivered by the four visiting Swamis on Sunday, March 22, at the spacious auditorium of the Society. Before two o'clock when the meeting opened the hall was packed to capacity, every inch of room being filled up, many standing, so that quite a large number had to be turned away for want of even peeping room. Each Swami spoke on a particular aspect of the life of Sri Ramakrishna keeping the huge crowd spellbound. Swami Vividishananda gave an illustrated talk on the Mission of Sri Ramakrishna showing delightful lantern pictures which created a lastingly vivid impression on the minds of the audience about the life of the Master and the work which has hitherto been done by his followers. The meeting closed at 5 P.M. with a prayer of peace.

NEW YORK

The Sri Ramakrishna Centenary by the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York was celebrated during a period of nearly three weeks. The Center began its celebration in the Chapel, on the 21st of February last, with a lecture by Swami Vividishananda of Washington, D.C., on Sri Ramakrishna, illustrated by beautiful lantern slides. A hundred and fifty people attended the lecture and felt themselves transported to the scenes of the holy life which has come to mean so much to them.

On February 22nd, two hundred friends and members of the Center participated in the Centenary dinner given in the large private dining room of a well-known restaurant near the Chapel. For the first time five Swamis of the Eastern Coast joined in one great function, to speak on the message of Sri Ramakrishna. It was most inspiring for the many guests to hear the Swamis Paramananda of Boston, Gnaneshwarananda of Chicago, Akhilananda of Providence, Vividishananda of Washington, and Swami Nikhilananda, each in his characteristic way told of the Master in whose service they had come far from their Mother-country to bestow His blessings far and wide. Mr. Salvatore de Madariaga, former ambassador of Spain to France and the U. S. A., and former chairman of the Disarmament Committee of the League of Nations, paid a beautiful tribute to the spiritual flowering of India, saying that he hoped it would soon be grafted on the tree of Western material progress. Many prominent New Yorkers attended the dinner, which received cordial notice from the press.

A week later, on Sunday, March 1st, the special Sri Ramakrishna Birthday Celebration was held at the Chapel, an unforgettable event for the crowds that attended it. Many eager souls stood out in the hallway to hear the service by Swami Nikhilananda, who spoke on the "Religious Experiences of a Great Master."

As the culmination of the Sri Ramakrishna Centennial, through the unstinted efforts of Swami Nikhilananda, a public meeting attended by twelve hundred people was held at the Town Hall of New York, on the evening of March 8 which was reported in our last May issue.

BURMA

The Sri Ramakrishna Birthday Centenary Celebrations in Burma which came to an end on the 20th April last, with a public meeting at which Swami Sharvananda, President, Ramakrishna Mission, Delhi, spoke on "The significance of the spiritual experiences of Sri Ramakrishna," were a great success.

The celebrations in Burma commenced on Friday, the 27th March last, with the opening of the Ramakrishna Centenary Exhibition of Arts and Crafts by Mr. M. M. Rafi, Mayor of Rangoon, at the Ladies' Park, East Rangoon. There was a very large gathering

present at the opening function. The Mayor in a simple speech paid a glowing tribute to the Saint of Dakshineswar, and exhorted the citizens of Rangoon to support the Exhibition by patronizing it in a large number. The support of the public was uniformly encouraging and about a lakh of people visited the Exhibition. Therefore the Exhibition was extended for a couple of days. On the 7th April, the Exhibition was closed. The stall-holders were granted certificates and medals, which were appreciated.

On the 5th April a mass procession was organized as part of the celebrations and the procession with a section devoted to various faiths and including Burmans, Indians, Chinese, and others went round the town through the principal thoroughfares. Symbols and placards, images and photos, of religious teachers and faiths were prominently displayed. More than 10,000 persons joined the procession, which proved to be most successful and the most effective means of bringing the message of the unity of the religions to the door of the man in the street.

The Religious Convention, which was the central feature of the celebrations, started on 8th April and lasted for three days. It was presided over by Prof. B. K. Sarkar of Calcutta University. Lectures were delivered by prominent and well-known local authorities on Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Zoroastrianism. On the 10th April, Prof. Sarkar delivered his presidential address.

On the following three days speeches were made on religious movements by prominent citizens. The subjects included Brahmoism, Arya Samaj, Sikhism, Taoism, Sufism, and Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement. Swami Sharvananda presided over the meetings on the 11th, 12th and 13th April, and spoke on Hinduism and Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement. Swami Sharvananda also delivered other public lectures on subjects connected with the Ramakrishna Centenary.

The celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna Centenary in districts were attended by Swami Sharvananda, who visited Pegu, Toungoo, Mandalay, and Maymyo, accompanied by Swami Punyananda, monk-in-charge of the Ramakrishna Hospital in Rangoon. They started from Rangoon on the 14th and returned on the 19th April. The celebrations in districts were enthusiastic and satisfactory.

RAMKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, SARGACHHI

The celebration of the eighth anniversary of the consecration of the Temple of Sri Ramakrishna at the Sargachhi Asrama came off successfully on the 24th May. The function began with Mangal Aratric and Puja in the morning. During the noon thousands of devotees and admirers coming from Calcutta, Murshidabad, Berhampore, and other places of the locality were entertained with beautiful Bhajan and other songs.

The music being over, a meeting was held at 1-30 P.M. under the presidency of Sreemat Swami Akhandanandaji Maharaj, the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, and a Bengali speech, regarding the lives and ideals of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, was delivered by Brahmachari Amulyakumar of Belur Math. The meeting came to a close with the concluding remarks of the president.

Then a Sankirtan party sang the holy name of Sri Krishna in chorus. As soon as the Sankirtan was over, hundreds of Daridra-Narayanans and Bhaktas began to rush to take the sacred Prasad. This began at 8-30 P.M. and was closed at 9 P.M. About 2,500 persons took Prasad this year. Perhaps, several hundreds more would have attended the ceremony, if there was no epidemic of small-pox. In one word, this year's celebration was a grand success.

NATIONAL INSURANCE CO., LD.

Whatever conduces to the well-being and prosperity of the country should be welcome. The usefulness of Insurance Companies, if reliable, is great. The Report for the year 1935 shows that the above Company has, through years of hard work and sound policy, built up a position which in its strength and solidarity places it among the first few of the Indian Life Offices. During the year under review the Company has written new business (gross) amounting to Rs. 1,73,06,138 as against Rs. 1,69,58,280 in 1934, notwithstanding the fact that the Company has increased its rates of premium in 1935. The Life Fund of the Company has increased by Rs. 28,00,000 to Rs. 2,52,84,298. Both the Premium and Interest incomes have recorded a substantial increase. The most notable achievement of the Company is the decrease of its Expense Ratio which stands at 25.8% as compared with 26.4% last year. The

investment position of the Company as revealed in the Balance-Sheet is quite safe and sound. In distributing the Company's assets it appears to be the constant endeavour of the Management to preserve a judicious balance between various classes of investments ensuring thereby the greatest degree of stability, and that must be called as one of the most healthy signs for a Life Office.

The New Building of the Madras Branch of the Company was opened in China Bazar Road, Madras, by Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer, on the 1st May last, in the presence of a large and distinguished gathering. Sir Sivaswami in his presidential speech said that the Company was one of the oldest and most successful of Life Assurance Companies managed by Indians.

RAMKRISHNA MISSION'S WORK AND APPEAL

KHULNA FAMINE

In our last report we have acquainted the public with the gravity of the situation due to famine in the Satkhira sub-division of the Khulna district. Men, women and children are starving by thousands. Over two-thirds of the population can barely manage to get a meal every other day. A small percentage is fortunate enough to have one meal a day. The rest have nothing to eat and have to fill their stomach with anything they can get. Naturally, cholera and other epidemics have broken out, with none to attend upon the sick. The earning members of most families have deserted their dependants, being unable to stand the sight of misery that knows no redress. Women are in rags, which forces them to keep indoors, although they are starving. There is not an iota of exaggeration in this picture. Rather many ugly features have been omitted.

From our Gabura centre in Thana Shyamnagar we distributed on the 1st June 27 mds. 24 srs. of rice to 552 recipients

belonging to 14 villages, and on the 9th June 43 mds. 26 srs. of rice to 873 recipients belonging to 16 villages. In addition to this, 9 mds. 38 srs. of rice was distributed as temporary aid.

BANKURA FAMINE

Bankura district is also badly affected by famine. Reports of the piteous condition of its inhabitants have been frequently reaching us. We have therefore decided to start relief work in the Kotalpur Thana of that district with the small amount of money at our disposal, relying on the sympathy of the public. Details of the work will be published in due course.

ARAKAN FLOOD

At Cheduba, a small island on the Arakan Coast of Burma, a centre has been started under the auspices of our Rangoon branch for the relief of the flood-stricken people of the Kyankpyu district. The first distribution of foodstuffs have already been made. Extreme difficulty of communication in this monsoon season has delayed our receiving the report in time.

Considering the appalling extensity of the distress, we have been able to touch only a fringe of it. The relief must be continued, and for this we need the hearty co-operation of the large-hearted public. We earnestly hope that in the coming month the response to our appeal will be more encouraging, so that we may serve these thousands of hungry Narayanas with at least a few mouthfuls of food, and remove their nakedness in howsoever imperfect a way. All contributions will be gratefully accepted and acknowledged at the following addresses:—

- (1) The President, Ramkrishna Mission,
Belur Math, District Howrah.
 - (2) The Manager, Advaita Ashrama,
4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta.
- (SD.) SWAMI MADHAVANANDA,
Acting Secretary, Ramkrishna Mission.